

Report to Congress on the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program for Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017



Submitted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau



Report to Congress on the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program for Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017

Table of Contents	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Introduction.....	1
Statutory Requirements for the Report to Congress	1
Time Period for the Report to Congress	1
Structure of the Report to Congress.....	2
SECTION 1: Addressing the Needs of Runaway and Homeless Youth	4
Historical Summary of Major Legislation and Executive Actions Responsive to Runaway and Homeless Youth	4
Statutory Definitions of Key Terms.....	5
The Scope, Correlations, and Consequences of Being a Runaway, Homeless, or Street Youth.....	6
FY SB’s Primary Role and Responsibilities for Runaway and Homeless Youth.....	8
FY SB Discretionary Funding Streams Dedicated to Runaway and Homeless Youth.....	9
FY SB Funding of National Entities to Serve Runaway and Homeless Youth	10
Responding to the Needs of Youth Outside of Traditional Youth-Serving Systems.....	10
Reducing Barriers for Diverse Groups of Youth	11
SECTION 2: Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability:	
RHY-HMIS Progress.....	13
FY SB Data and Outcome Accountability Strategies	13
The Four Core Outcome Domains	13
Program Performance Standards	14
Logic Models and Outcome Specifications	15
FY SB and RHY Grantee Progress Implementing a Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Reporting System.....	16
The RHY Homeless Management Information System.....	16
Basic Center Program	17
Funding Focus	17
BCP Data and Outcome Progress.....	18
Youth Served by BCP Grantees	19
BCP Services Provided to Youth	20
BCP Discharge Planning Follow-Up and Aftercare.....	22
Transitional Living Programs/Maternity Group Homes	23
Funding Focus	23
TLP/MGH Data and Outcome Progress.....	24
Youth Served by TLP Grantees	24
TLP/MGH Services Provided to Youth	25
TLP/MGH Discharge Planning Follow-Up and Aftercare.....	26
Street Outreach Program	27
Funding Focus	27
SOP Data and Outcomes Progress	27
Youth Served by SOP Grantees	28
SOP Services Provided to Youth	28
Illustrative Initial Outcome Data Across RHY Discretionary Grant Programs.....	30
SECTION 3: Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability	
Approaches: Program Performance-Monitoring Progress	32
Standard Program Performance-Monitoring Procedures	32
New Program Performance-Monitoring Procedures.....	33
Program Performance-Monitoring Procedures Data.....	34

Promising Practices	35
Emerging Practices	36
FYSB Plans for Continuous Performance-Monitoring Progress	37
SECTION 4: Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability: Research and Program Improvement Investments	39
Street Outreach Program Data Collection Study	39
SOP Data Collection Study Outcomes	39
Plans for Ongoing Progress	40
The Transitional Living Program Special Populations Demonstration Project	40
TLP Demonstration Project Outcomes	41
TLP Plans for Ongoing Progress	41
The Successful Transitions for Adulthood Research Study (STARS)	41
Domestic Victims of Human Trafficking Demonstration Projects	42
DVHT Demonstration Projects Evaluation and Recommendation	44
DVHT Human Trafficking Demonstration Project Plans for Ongoing Progress	45
SECTION 5: Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability: Service Provision Data For FYSB-Funded National Entities Supporting RHY Grantees and RHY	47
Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center	47
RHYTTAC-Initiated FYSB Grantee Training	48
FYSB Grantee Training by Program Type	49
Technical Assistance Clinics and Institutes	49
Webinars	49
Web-Based (Self-Directed) Learning	50
Grantee-Initiated Technical Assistance	51
Targeted, Intensive Technical Assistance	51
Support for Emerging and Promising Practices, Outcomes, and Sharing of Information	51
Information Services	52
Culture of Care Project	52
Transitional Living Program Special Population—Demonstration Project	52
Enhancing Sustainability Project	52
National Runaway Safeline	52
Utilization and Service Data	53
Public Service Announcements	59
<i>Let’s Talk</i> Curriculum	59
National Runaway Prevention Month	60
National Clearinghouse on Homeless Youth and Families (NCHYF)	60
SECTION 6: Conclusions	61
Addressing the Needs of RHY	61
Summary	61
Future Activity	62
Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability: RHY-HMIS Progress	62
Summary	62
Future Activity	63
Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability Approaches: Program Performance-Monitoring Progress	63
Summary	63
Future Activity	64

Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability: Research and Program Improvement Investments	64
Summary	64
Future Activity	65
Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability: Service Provision Data for FYSB-Funded National Entities Supporting RHY Grantees and RHY.....	66
Summary	66
Future Activity	67

Tables

Table 1. Youth Served by Basic Center Program Grantees	19
Table 2. Youth Served by Transitional Living Program Grantees	24
Table 3. Youth Served by Street Outreach Program Grantees	28
Table 4. Illustrative Initial RHY Discretionary Grant Outcomes	31
Table 5. Summary of Onsite Reviews	37
Table 6. Breadth of RHYTTAC Contact with Grantee across RHY Funding Streams.....	47
Table 7. Breadth of Participation in Major RHYTTAC Training Events.....	48
Table 8. Data Summary of RHYTTAC Web-Based Events.....	51
Table 9. National Runaway Safeline Crisis Log Source and Referral Data Summary.....	54
Table 10. National Runaway Safeline Crisis Log Detail Data Summary	54
Table 11. National Runaway Safeline Digital Crisis Log Data Summary	55
Table 12. National Runaway Safeline Home Free Program Data Summary.....	55
Table 13. National Runaway Safeline Contacts by Gender Data Summary.....	55
Table 14. National Runaway Safeline Contacts by Ethnicity Data Summary.....	55
Table 15. Youth Status at Point of National Runaway Safeline Contact Data Summary	57
Table 16. National Runaway Safeline Data Summary of Issues at point of Contact	57
Table 17. National Runaway Safeline Data Summary of Options Discussed at Point of Contact	58
Table 18. National Runaway Safeline Unmet Needs Data Summary	58
Table 19. Data Summary for Let’s Talk Curriculum.....	59

Figures

Figure 1. RHY Historical Chronology	5
Figure 2. RHY Population Definitions	6
Figure 3. Street Outreach Program Logic Model Example	16
Figure 4. Key Onsite Activities	33
Figure 5. National Runaway Safeline Website Activity, FY 2014–FY 2017.....	53

Introduction

This Report to Congress describes primary activities and services carried out by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), an agency within the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The purpose of these primary activities is to support grantees to meet the needs and aspirations of runaway and homeless youth (RHY). The submission of this Report to Congress fulfills FYSB's mandate to submit a biannual report on the status and results of FYSB investments in RHY.

Statutory Requirements for the Report to Congress

Under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (the Act), FYSB is required to submit a Report to Congress every 2 years on the status, activities, and accomplishments of entities that receive RHY grants. FYSB must provide information on the extent to which grantees are contributing to:

- Alleviating the problems of RHY;
- Reuniting such youth with their families and encouraging the resolution of intra-family problems through counseling and other services (where applicable and appropriate);
- Strengthening family relationships and encouraging stable living conditions for such youth; and
- Assisting such youth to decide upon a future course of action.

Grantees are also expected to report on:

- The number, demographics, and characteristics of homeless youth served by such projects;
- The types of activities carried out by such projects;
- The effectiveness of such projects in assisting homeless youth to decide upon future education, employment, and independent living; and
- The effectiveness of such projects in preparing homeless youth for self-sufficiency (specifically through Transitional Living Programs [TLPs]).

FYSB is also required to report on:

- The activities and programs planned for the following fiscal year (FY), addressed as next steps in achieving the potential of FYSB services and support;
- Grantee evaluations performed as part of the ongoing performance monitoring; and
- The training provided to individuals involved in carrying out such evaluations.

Time Period for the Report to Congress

The Report to Congress covers the biennium of FY 2016 (October 1, 2015, to September 30, 2016) and FY 2017 (October 1, 2016, to September 30, 2017). The Act authorized appropriations to FYSB of \$119 million each year for FY 2016 and FY 2017 with which to administer the RHY program and provide related support.

Structure of the Report to Congress

Section 1 of the report, **Addressing the Needs of Runaway and Homeless Youth**, provides background on the **scope and consequences** of youth homelessness nationwide during the biennium. In addition, this section summarizes the **legislative response** to youth homelessness up to and through FY 2017 and the resulting **roles and responsibilities** for FYSB as the only federal agency dedicated specifically to addressing the needs of homeless youth.

The target populations for RHY grantee services are discussed in relation to eligibility criteria and to a reduction in service barriers resulting from the application of best practices when working with homeless youth and their families.

Section 2 of the report, **Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability: RHY-HMIS Progress**, focuses on the progress FYSB, its grantees, and its partners are making in defining, tracking, and reporting on key outcomes that serve as evidence that activities have tangibly improved the lives of RHY. The section identifies ongoing efforts to build data quality in the Runaway and Homeless Youth-Homeless Management Information System (RHY-HMIS) and facilitate continued efforts for the RHY-HMIS integration with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) HMIS. The discussion in the section incorporates (1) federal performance standards set out in the legislation; (2) the core outcome domains for homeless youth identified by FYSB and incorporated into the RHY Final Rule, released in the Federal Register in December of 2016; and (3) the criteria for program performance specified in funding opportunity announcements (FOAs) for each RHY program. These outcomes encompass variables such as (1) strengthening the physical and emotional safety of RHY; (2) reducing the threat of serious harm from high-risk living situations, including exposure to the threat of human trafficking and other sexual and economic exploitation; and (3) addressing and reducing the physical and emotional toll of having no safe, stable place to live. Important components of the data-driven FYSB reporting system are described.

Section 3 of the report, **Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability Approaches: Program Performance-Monitoring Progress**, focuses on strategies and methods FYSB is employing to sustain and strengthen its grantee performance monitoring and continuous improvement efforts. The discussion describes actions being taken to strengthen the structure, reporting instruments, and reliability of the performance-monitoring system. Data summarizing FYSB's breadth of monitoring for the years covered in the report and the results of mandated onsite visits to RHY discretionary grantees are presented.

Section 4 of the report, **Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability: Research and Program Improvement Investments**, focuses on FYSB financial and programmatic support for a number of demonstration projects. This section also explores rigorous evaluation studies to grow the RHY evidence base and contribute to establishing a data and outcome orientation to RHY oversight of and guidance to RHY discretionary grant funding. Research being conducted into specific discretionary program outcomes (e.g., the TLP Outcome Study) is described.

Section 5 of the report, **Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability: Service Provision Data for FYSB-Funded National Entities Supporting RHY Grantees and RHY**, conveys the scope and extent of services being provided with FYSB funds by (1) the Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center (RHYTTAC), which provides services to all grantees; and (2) the National Communication System for Runaway and

Homeless Youth (NCS) providing performance data for both documents on FYSB's attentiveness to and utilization of data for monitoring and decision-making purposes.

Section 6 of the report, **Conclusions**, summarizes progress and findings related to FYSB's increased attention to data-driven and outcome-based approaches to accountability. It also identifies future activity to inform and guide FYSB's ongoing work in the area.

SECTION 1: Addressing the Needs of Runaway and Homeless Youth

In order to acquire a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and issues confronting RHY, actions taken by the federal government on their behalf and the pervasive interrelated risk factors they experience on a daily basis need to be identified. Providing a synopsis of major statutory and executive agency activities pertaining to RHY—including legislative-based definitions of key terms and an overview of FYSB’s RHY initiatives—is an essential starting point to set the proper context for establishing the needs of the RHY population and the basic elements of the federal response. These components also establish a critical framework for this Report to Congress.

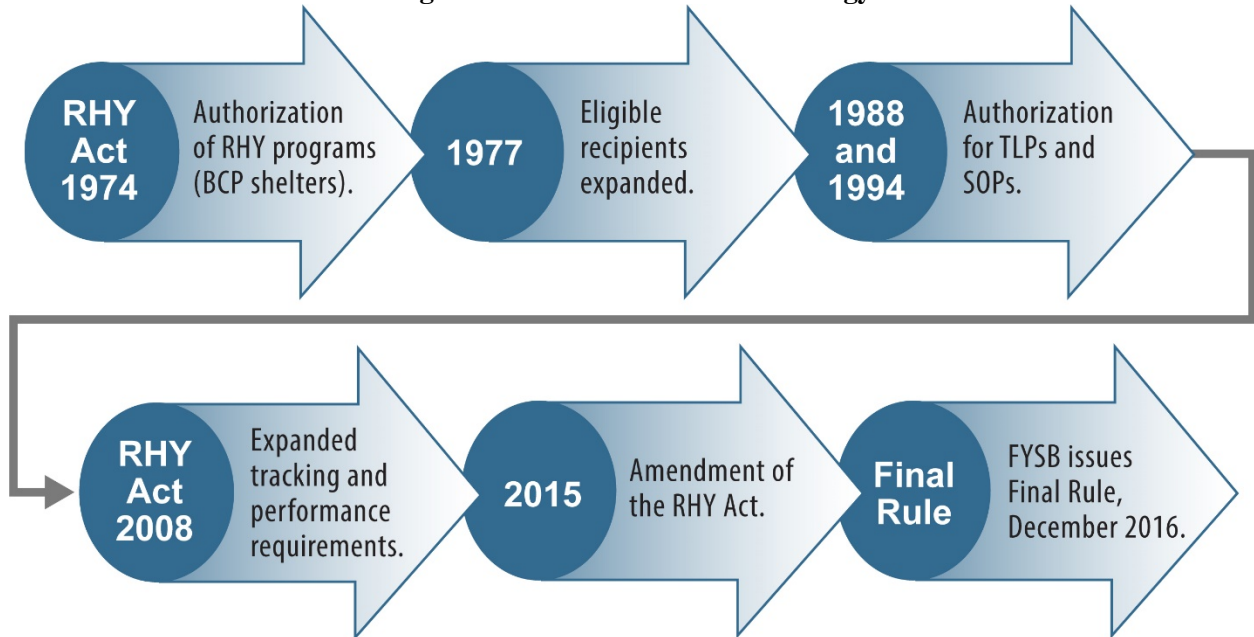
Historical Summary of Major Legislation and Executive Actions Responsive to Runaway and Homeless Youth

The timeline presented below highlights key legislative action by Congress and FYSB’s responses to legislative requirements.

- **1974** – Congress passed initial authorization of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (the Act) as part of title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. The Act established funding for discretionary grants for Basic Center Programs (BCPs) providing shelter for RHY. It was the sole federal law targeting unaccompanied youth.
- **1977** – Eligibility for RHY services was expanded. Otherwise, homeless youth were added to runaway youth as the target population for FYSB services and grantee funding.
- **1988** – Congress created the TLP via the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 for older homeless youth who could not safely return home.
- **1994** – Congress added the Education and Prevention Services to Reduce Sexual Abuse of Runaway, Homeless, and Street Youth Program (referred to as the Street Outreach Program [SOP]), in an effort to prevent sexual abuse or exploitation (via the Violent Crime and Law Enforcement Act of 1994).
- **2008** – The Act was reauthorized as the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008, including the BCP (authorized under part A), the TLP and Maternity Group Home (MGH) Program (authorized under part B), and SOP (authorized under part E). The reauthorization increased funding for basic centers and SOPs; required HHS to develop national estimates of the prevalence and incidence of homelessness among the youth population; increased the maximum length of shelter stays or temporary housing in BCPs from 14 to 21 days; required performance standards for all programs; and required that programs utilize a positive youth development (PYD) approach.
- **2015** – An amendment of the Act by the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (Pub. L. 114-22) was implemented. This amendment added human trafficking victims to the populations served by the SOP.
- **2016** – FYSB issued the RHY Final Rule in December 2016. It built upon existing policies and guidance to better support RHY by strengthening training and professional development for service providers, defining safe and appropriate exits from homelessness, requiring aftercare planning for all youth exiting programs, and improving nondiscrimination protections for youth. The rule also clarified statutory changes made

to the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act of 2008 and clarified legislative and programmatic requirements, including clarification and updated definitions within performance standards and policies for each program type. It specifically addressed nondiscrimination, background checks, outreach, and training. It also updated existing regulations to reflect statutory changes made to the Act and procedures for soliciting and awarding grants.

Figure 1. RHY Historical Chronology



Notes. BCPs = Basic Center Programs; FYSB = Family and Youth Services Bureau; RHY = runaway and homeless youth; SOPs = Street Outreach Programs; TLPs = Transitional Living Programs.

Statutory Definitions of Key Terms

Several important statutory definitions of the RHY population establish the parameters for identifying their needs and implementing responsive services. Consistent with the Act, FYSB programs and grantees operate under the following definitions in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2. RHY Population Definitions

HOMELESS YOUTH means an individual—

(A) who is—

- (i) less than 21 years of age, or, in the case of a youth seeking shelter in a center under part A (BCP), less than 18 years of age, or is less than a higher maximum age if the state where the center is located has an applicable state or local law (including a regulation) that permits such higher maximum age in compliance with licensure requirements for child- and youth-serving facilities; and
- (ii) for the purposes of part B (TLP), not less than 16 years of age and either—
 - (I) less than 22 years of age; or
 - (II) not less than 22 years of age, as of the expiration of the maximum period of stay permitted under section 11222(a)(2) of this title if such individual commences such stay before reaching 22 years of age;

(B) for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative; and

(C) who has no other safe alternative living arrangement.

RUNAWAY YOUTH—The term “runaway,” used with respect to a youth, means an individual who is less than 18 years of age and who absents himself or herself from home or a place of legal residence without the permission of a parent or legal guardian.

YOUTH AT RISK OF SEPARATION FROM THE FAMILY—The term “youth at risk of separation from the family” means an individual—

(A) who is less than 18 years of age; and

(B) (i) who has a history of running away from the family of such individual;

(ii) whose parent, guardian, or custodian is not willing to provide for the basic needs of such individual; or

(iii) who is at risk of entering the child welfare system or juvenile justice system as a result of the lack of services available to the family to meet such needs.

STREET YOUTH—The term “street youth” means an individual who—

(A) is—

(i) a runaway youth; or

(ii) indefinitely or intermittently a homeless youth; and

(B) spends a significant amount of time on the street or in other areas that increase the risk to such youth for sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, prostitution, or drug abuse.

Source. Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, 34 U.S.C. § 11279.

The Scope, Correlations, and Consequences of Being a Runaway, Homeless, or Street Youth

While homelessness has consistently affected a significant number of youths across the United States, the scope of youth homelessness has been difficult to accurately measure. Estimates of the number of RHY, including youth living on the street, have historically varied greatly, depending on the source of the data and the methodologies employed for collecting that data. The reported numbers tend to consistently underestimate the actual number of RHY. For

example, point-in-time counts have often identified much smaller numbers for a region or state than the number of homeless youth reported by school districts, and one gap that exists in point-in-time counts is the coverage of unaccompanied youth (or those living separately from any family members) under the age of 24. Many Continuums of Care (CoCs) report zero unaccompanied youth in their communities, while the city or region in which these communities are located are known to have substantial numbers of youth living on the street”.¹ Moreover, the research literature on the number and characteristics of RHY is fairly limited and dated.²

This makes the recent efforts of the Voices of Youth Count (VOYC) study by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago to provide more accurate national estimates of RHY invaluable. *Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America National Estimates* attempts to capture youth homelessness more broadly and accurately by identifying those missed in point-in-time and other traditional counts. Their methodology encompasses those sleeping on the streets, those in youth and family shelters, those who have run away, and those who have been kicked out of their homes and who are seen as “couch surfers,” moving from one temporary bed to another. VOYC surveys of youth indicate that approximately 1 in 30 adolescents ages 13 to 17, or approximately 700,000 youth, reported homelessness within a 12-month period.³ The VOYC employed multiple research approaches and data collection methods to more thoroughly and accurately capture and understand the experiences of RHY, while also identifying a broader range of their issues and concerns along with corresponding opportunities for intervention. It provides a much richer and authentic depiction of RHY and what their needs are. It also presents an important perspective by moving beyond an exclusive focus on housing as the fundamental issue for RHY.

VOYC findings also paint a more detailed portrait of the scope and consequences of youth homelessness. According to the VOYC, over half of youth (52 percent) felt unsafe during one or more episodes of homelessness. This is consistent with multiple research efforts looking at RHY experiences. Researchers at Loyola University’s Modern Slavery Research Project found that a combined 19.4 percent of homeless youth interviewed were victims of trafficking.⁴

The Modern Slavery Research Project’s *Labor and Sex Trafficking Among Homeless Youth, A Ten City Study* also highlights that RHY are particularly vulnerable to be recruited into labor trafficking. The study found that 81 percent of labor trafficking cases involved forced drug dealing, often occurring as a result of familial and cultural coercion as well as pressure from suppliers and gangs. Traffickers who pose as job recruiters approach the youth and offer them lucrative work opportunities in commission-based, seemingly legitimate industries, such as sales, modeling, domestic work, and agriculture.

Some factors significantly correlate with human trafficking and its intersection with RHY. These factors may include having a history of physical or sexual abuse; witnessing violence in the home; having mental health issues, including a history of suicidality; having family with

¹ National Alliance to End Homelessness. *What Is a Point-in-Time Count?* September 7, 2012. <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/what-is-a-point-in-time-count/>

² Adrienne L. Fernandez-Alcantara. *Runaway and Homeless Youth: Demographics and Programs* (Congressional Research Service Report). Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 2018. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL33785.pdf>

³ M.H. Morton, A. Dworsky, and G.M. Samuels. *Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America. National Estimates*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, 2017.

⁴ Laura Murphy. *Labor and Sex Trafficking Among Homeless Youth, A Ten City Study*. New Orleans, LA: Loyola University, 2016. <https://www.modernslaveryresearch.org/research>

legal problems; having a history of being arrested; or having a disabling condition.⁵ According to a Field Center study of homeless youth in Philadelphia, Phoenix, and Washington, DC, 95 percent of youth who were sex trafficked reported a history of childhood maltreatment—including sexual (49 percent) and physical (33 percent) abuse—while 41 percent had been in out-of-home placements.⁶

Data from the RHY-HMIS (the RHY reporting component of HUD’s HMIS) provided additional insight into the correlations and consequences of homelessness among youth. Among the 70 percent of RHY whose health and/or substance abuse status was known when they entered an RHY grantee project, more than one in five (21 percent in FY 2016 and 22 percent in FY 2017) identified mental health problems. Among those youth, 43 percent identified substance abuse issues (in an unduplicated count, available for FY 2016 only), and 3 percent reported chronic health conditions in FY 2016 and 4 percent in FY 2017.

FYSB’s Primary Role and Responsibilities for Runaway and Homeless Youth

FYSB’s RHY discretionary grant programs are designed to ensure that effective projects, services, and interventions are in place and being implemented. Their overarching purpose is to build skills and capacities that contribute to healthy, positive, and productive functioning and the healthy transition of youth into adulthood. This includes providing comprehensive supportive services and a safe living situation through shelter—directly through BCP projects, through referral from SOP projects, and through long-term shelter in TLP and MGH projects.

Addressing the impact of trauma, which research shows has a profound effect on the overall functioning of children, youth, and families, is an important part of promoting social and emotional health and well-being. Therefore, FYSB requires grantees to incorporate a trauma-informed approach into their programs, which involves understanding and responding to the symptoms of chronic, interpersonal trauma and traumatic stress, as well as the behavioral and mental health consequences of trauma. FYSB is committed to facilitating healing, recovery, and promoting the social and emotional well-being of children, youth, and families who have experienced homelessness, neglect, exposure to violence, and/or trauma.

Additionally, FYSB funds projects to prevent sex and labor trafficking and promote effective trafficking interventions among RHY grantee projects. These ongoing efforts seek to combat sexual exploitation and trafficking incidents among runaway, homeless, and street youth and equip funded programs with the necessary tools to identify and support youth victims or those at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking.

FYSB’s RHY Program provides essential funding for the provision of shelter, support, and prevention services to RHY. Grants are administered to public and private organizations to establish and operate youth emergency shelters, TLPs, and street outreach efforts. FYSB provides grant and program management and technical support through a network of regional program managers (RPMs) and federal project officers. FYSB’s role includes conducting

⁵ Makini Chisolm-Straker, Jeremy Sze, Julia Einbond, James White, and Hanni Stoklosa. *Recognizing Human Trafficking Among Homeless Youth*. Newark, NJ: Covenant House New Jersey, 2017.

⁶ Debra Schilling Wolfe, Johanna K.P. Greeson, Sarah Wasch, and Daniel Treglia. *Human Trafficking Prevalence and Child Welfare Risk Facts Among Homeless Youth, A Multi-City Study*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Field Center for Children’s Policy, Practice & Research, 2018. <https://fieldcenteratpenn.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/6230-R10-Field-Center-Full-Report-Web.pdf>

financial and administrative oversight of all RHY grants and grantees, ensuring accountability and compliance with federal legislation, enacting regulations and policies, and operating a peer monitoring system. The services within each of the programs, and their outcomes, are described in greater detail in Section 2. Each discretionary grant program is briefly summarized below.

FYSB Discretionary Funding Streams Dedicated to Runaway and Homeless Youth

Basic Center Program: The BCP funds grants to community-based, public, and nonprofit private agencies (and combinations of such entities) to establish and operate local centers to provide services for RHY and their families. Basic Center Program projects serve youth under 18 years of age and can provide up to 21 days of shelter. BCP grantees provide outreach, crisis intervention, temporary shelter, counseling, family unification, and aftercare services to RHY and their families. The scope of work is to include access to shelter, gateway services, assessment, coordinated case management, aftercare services, and continuum service linkages. FYSB's intent is to increase young people's safety, social and emotional well-being, and self-sufficiency, and help them build permanent connections with families, communities, schools, and other positive social networks.

Transitional Living Program: The primary goal of the TLP is to help RHY between the ages of 16 to under 22 establish sustainable living and well-being for themselves and, if applicable, their dependent children. Youth must be between the ages of 16 and 21 years and 364 days (one day short of age 22) to enter the program. Living accommodations may include:

- supervised apartments owned by the program or rented in the community;
- scattered-site apartments;
- group homes;
- maternity group homes; and
- host homes.

TLP grantees provide long-term, safe, and stable housing for homeless youth; individual and group counseling; life skills training; interpersonal skill building; educational advancement; job attainment skills; and physical and behavioral health care. MGHs, which are TLPs serving pregnant and parenting RHY, provide parenting support and education in addition to the TLP housing and services listed. The emphasis is on helping homeless youth develop the skills necessary to make a successful transition to self-sufficient living. Through the provision of shelter and services, FYSB expects TLP grantees to improve youth outcomes related to safe and stable housing, education/employment, permanent connections, and social and emotional well-being.

Street Outreach Program: The primary purpose of the SOP is to provide street-based services to runaway, homeless, and street youth less than 21 years of age who have been subjected to, or are at risk of being subjected to, sexual abuse, prostitution, sexual exploitation, and severe forms of trafficking in persons. The intent of the SOP is to increase young people's personal safety, social and emotional well-being, and self-sufficiency, and to help them build permanent connections with families, communities, schools, and other positive social networks. The scope of SOP grantee projects is to include outreach, prevention, individualized assessment, service linkages, case planning, and follow-up for youth. Services include (but are not limited to) basic needs, including food, clothing, hygiene, or first aid packages; and information about services

and safe places and encouragement to enter them. FYSB utilizes the SOP to reduce sexual exploitation and human trafficking incidents among at-risk, runaway, and homeless youth.

FYSB Funding of National Entities to Serve Runaway and Homeless Youth

FYSB also funds three national-level entities to directly support RHY, RHY grantees, and other youth-serving organizations. They are (1) the RHYTTAC, (2) the National Runaway Safeline (NRS), and (3) the National Clearinghouse for Homeless Youth and Families (NCHYF). The role of each entity is summarized below.

Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center: RHYTTAC operates as the training and technical assistance (T&TA) provider for all RHY grantees. Available online at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/programs/runaway-homeless-youth/programs/rhyttac>, RHYTTAC delivers a comprehensive array of scheduled and on-demand T&TA at the local, regional, and national levels. Its work is designed to address grantee needs and help ensure grantees' ability to meet federal standards and guidelines as well as those set forth in the RHY Final Rule. Its T&TA activities support incorporating and implementing research-based approaches (e.g., trauma-informed care and positive youth development) and emerging issues and strategies related to producing effective RHY grantee outcomes. The T&TA efforts intend to increase the ability of grantees and youth professionals to provide promising and emerging evidence-informed youth intervention and prevention services in a low-barrier and culturally/linguistically appropriate manner. Detailed data on RHYTTAC services are provided in Section 5.

The National Communication System for Runaway and Homeless Youth: The NCS is currently operated by the NRS, a national nonprofit organization located in Chicago. NRS serves as the federally funded national communication system for youth in crisis, RHY, and their families. The NRS provides education and solution-focused interventions and offers nonsectarian, nonjudgmental support to at-risk youth and their families online, by text, and by phone, 24/7. Every November, the NRS in collaboration with FYSB coordinates National Runaway Prevention Month to increase the visibility of RHY services and to encourage national discussions and solutions to issues related to RHY. The NRS also links youth and parents to multiple services (i.e., mental health, counseling, substance abuse, shelters), including the Home Free Program (providing safe transportation home), a partnership between the NRS and Greyhound Lines, Inc. Detailed data on NRS services are provided in Section 5.

The National Clearinghouse for Homeless Youth and Families: Previously known as the National Clearinghouse for Families and Youth, the Clearinghouse primarily provides RHY grantees (as well as non-grantees) that are developing and implementing prevention and intervention services for RHY and their families with a continuously updated library of information and resources. The Clearinghouse platform is used to highlight important upcoming events in the RHY field, publish relevant FOAs and philanthropic funding opportunities, and present summaries of up-to-date research findings that support the work of the RHY field.

Responding to the Needs of Youth Outside of Traditional Youth-Serving Systems

Consistent with the intent of the Act and its reauthorizations, the RHY Program targets youth not being served within the traditional youth services systems of juvenile justice (the juvenile court

and juvenile services) and child welfare (social services, including child abuse and neglect services, and foster care systems). Youth in the United States have traditionally accessed health services (for both physical and mental health), financial support, housing, and a range of other interventions through these formal systems, most typically by coming under the purview of the court (e.g., getting arrested and/or put on probation) or as a result of child abuse and neglect concerns (e.g., through an abuse complaint or as a result of being surrendered to be placed in foster care). Thus, youth have traditionally had limited access to services without them or their families entering these formal systems.

RHY Programs do not serve youth who are court ordered into a program or placed by the child welfare system. Grantees focus instead on those youth who would otherwise slip through the cracks of local and state service systems, including those who have aged out of foster care and those who were previously in the juvenile justice system but may now have few, if any, community supports in place. Without the alternative services provided by FYSB and its grantees, RHY would have few routes to services without substantial and even insurmountable barriers.

Unlike traditional service systems, RHY grantees do not wait for legal involvement or formal complaints of abuse to become involved with youth. SOP grantees, and the outreach components of BCP and TLP grantees, actively seek out youth in need of services through street-based outreach teams, outreach to other service providers, and agency and community education efforts. Systems youth are also eligible for RHY BCP services if they have run away from a placement or were told to leave. In those instances, the BCP is responsible for coordinating the return of the youth or ensuring the system assumes financial responsibility.

Reducing Barriers for Diverse Groups of Youth

The combination of outreach efforts and removal of formal obstacles to the services (such as requiring a legal complaint) described above are key to reducing barriers to services for RHY. The Act requires that RHY projects serve diverse populations of RHY.

The RHY Final Rule includes language to “ensure homeless youth are not discriminated against or excluded from programs or services because of their race, ethnicity, age, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, physical or cognitive ability, or background.” The RHY Program has targeted programming for pregnant and parenting youth (through MGH grantees) as well as T&TA from RHYTTAC and the resource library built and maintained by the Clearinghouse for all grantees. Requirements within the FOAs for the funding of RHY grants include specific criteria related to serving overrepresented and underserved groups as well, including:

- An assessment of community needs that includes RHY groups with unique needs and/or barriers to services;
- Evidence of cultural competency among staff in relation to their target population(s), and a plan for assuring competency through training;
- Partnerships with community services providers with proven expertise in working with identified RHY populations in the community;
- The use of culturally appropriate assessment tools within the grantee project(s) to support individual service plans; and

- The use of promising and emerging practices with demonstrated effectiveness for target populations.

The Domestic Victims of Human Trafficking (DVHT) Demonstration Project (begun in 2014 with a second cohort funded from 2015 to 2017 and continued through a no-cost extension to September 2018) funded grantees to enhance the services for victims of human trafficking and demonstrate the impact of coordinated and comprehensive case management, community collaboration, and direct victim services. The TLP Demonstration Project provided general and targeted TA to nine FYSB-funded cooperative agreements for the 24-month TLP demonstration project to implement, enhance, and/or support a framework or model that incorporates promising strategies for the effective transition of homeless youth and/or young adults to self-sufficiency. The target populations were lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) RHY (ages 16 to 21) and young adults who were emancipated from foster care. The TLP Evaluation Study (begun in 2014 and continuing through 2019) focuses on youth between the ages of 16 and 21 experiencing homelessness.

SECTION 2: Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability: RHY-HMIS Progress

The reauthorization of the Act in 2008 placed greater emphasis on outcomes for RHY discretionary grant recipients. The challenges cited in the first section of the report documented the issues associated with accurately estimating the number of RHY in the United States. They also reinforced the history of very limited valid and reliable data on RHY. Despite these inherent challenges, FYSB continues to develop policies and strategies to comply with federal statutory and regulatory requirements and maintain attentiveness to grantee outcomes. In response, FYSB has formulated and implemented enhanced procedures related to data tracking, collection, and analysis for all its discretionary program grantees over the past several years.

FYSB Data and Outcome Accountability Strategies

FYSB discretionary grantee outcome-focused activities fall into three major categories: (1) articulating the four core outcome domains for youth experiencing homelessness, which are derived from FYSB's participation in a federal interagency homeless initiative; (2) responding to federal program performance standards specified and defined in the RHY legislation; and (3) requiring all potential RHY grantees to develop logic models and specify short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes as part of their grant applications, along with the requirement that the outcomes be regularly reported throughout the duration of the grant.

The Four Core Outcome Domains

As part of the development of the Final Rule, FYSB developed four core outcome domains to measure the impact of its RHY programs.

- **Safe Housing** includes a safe and reliable place to call home. Stable housing fulfills a critical and basic need for homeless youth. It is essential to enabling functioning across a range of life activities. Lack of stable housing, on the other hand, exposes young people to a multitude of risks on the streets.
- **Permanent Connections** include ongoing attachments to families, communities, schools, and other positive social networks. Connections support young people's ability to access new ideas and opportunities that allow them to thrive, and they provide a social safety net when young people are at risk of reentering homelessness.
- **Education or Employment** includes high performance in and completion of educational and training activities, especially for younger youth, and starting and maintaining adequate and stable employment, particularly for older youth. Achievements in education and employment increase a youth's capacity to support himself or herself and avoid future homelessness.
- **Social and Emotional Well-being** refers to the social and emotional functioning of homeless youth. It includes the development of key competencies, attitudes, and behaviors that help a young person experiencing homelessness avoid unhealthy risks and to succeed across multiple domains of daily life, including school, work, relationships, and community.

The core outcome domains incorporated by FYSB in the BCP, TLP, and MGH Funding Opportunity Announcements to address and operationalize federal Program Performance Standards, are:

- **Safe and Stable Housing**—Assuring safe, stable housing for youth that is sustainable over time;
- **Permanent Connections**—Establishing lasting social and community supports through connections with healthy, positive role models, mentors, and peers;
- **Education and/or Employment**—Completing formal education and training that supports the acquisition of jobs paying a living wage and the development of career paths; and
- **Social and Emotional Well-being**—Enhancing well-being in relation to positive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal functioning (e.g., problem severity, hopefulness, and satisfaction).

Program Performance Standards

The RHY Final Rule, which went into effect on January 19, 2017, identified mandatory performance standards for each of the RHY grant programs. All BCP and TLP/MGH grantees are required to address and enhance their outcomes for youth in relation to each of the four core outcome domains. In addition, each grant program has its own specific performance standards:

BCP

The grantee tracks and reports data on each of the following performance standards, applying to all RHY-funded grantees beginning on October 1, 2017.

- Outcomes for youth in the following four core areas:
 - Social and Emotional Well-being;
 - Permanent Connections;
 - Education or Employment; and
 - Safe and Stable Housing
- Trauma-informed counseling services that match the individual needs of each client: reported by each grantee on the type of counseling each youth received (individual, family, and/or group counseling), the participation rate based on a youth's service plan or treatment plan, and the completion rate based on a youth's service plan or treatment plan, where applicable.
- For grantees that choose to provide (optional) street-based services, home-based services, drug and/or alcohol abuse education and prevention services, and/or testing for sexually transmitted diseases (at the request of the youth), data shall be reported on the completion rate for each service provided based on the youth's service or treatment plan.
- Each grantee shall report data on the type of exit experienced by each young person departing a BCP.

TLP

The grantee tracks and reports data on each of the following performance standards, applying to all RHY-funded grantees beginning on October 1, 2017.

- Outcomes for youth in the following four core areas:
 - Social and Emotional Well-being;
 - Permanent Connections;
 - Education or Employment; and
 - Safe and stable Housing
- Each grantee shall report data on the type of education or job-related activities that each youth is engaged in.
- Grantees shall report that youth receive healthcare referrals, including both services and insurance, as determined within their healthcare referral plan.
- MGH grantees shall report that youth receive consistent pre-natal care, well-baby exams, and immunizations for the infant while in the program.
- Each grantee shall report data on the type of exit experienced by each young person departing a TLP.

SOP

Each grantee shall report data related to number of youths who are or who are at risk of homeless or runaway status on the streets in numbers that are reasonably attainable for the staff size of the project.

- Grantees shall engage 33 percent of youth.

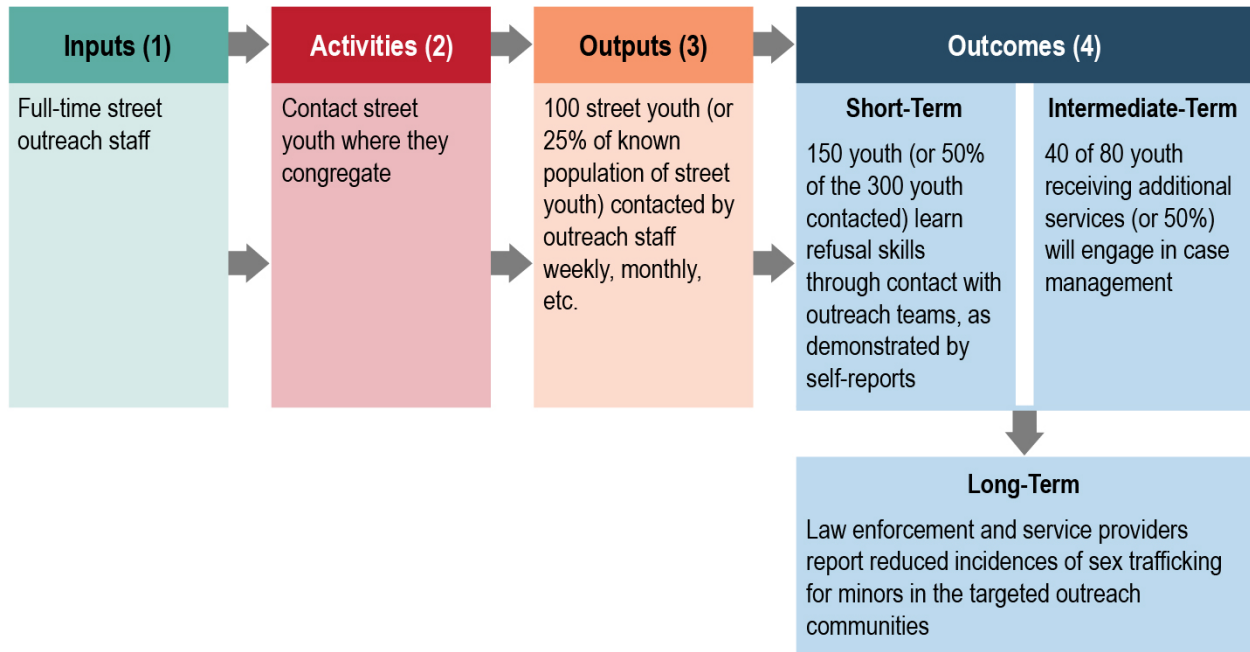
Logic Models and Outcome Specifications

All the outcomes responsive to stipulated federal performance standards and contained in the logic models required of each grantee are directly related to one or more of the four core outcome domains.

While each RHY applicant can submit a logic model in a format of its choosing, each one must show the relationship between project activities and associated program performance standards. In addition, each logic model must distinguish among different types of outcomes. This means delineating among short-term and more immediate outcomes (changes in knowledge and skill levels for RHY and their families); intermediate and more midterm outcomes (changes in behavior or performance levels for RHY); and long-term and more future-oriented outcomes (macro-level changes such as an eventual reduction in the number of homeless youth).

The logic model serves as the framework for each project's evaluation plan, which is designed to measure the extent to which proposed changes in outcomes occur. Figure 3 provides an example of a typical logic model structure and each of its components applicable to an SOP project.

Figure 3. Street Outreach Program Logic Model Example



FYSB and RHY Grantee Progress Implementing a Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Reporting System

FYSB is committed to implementing a data-driven and outcome-based approach. In this section of the Report to Congress, the progress FYSB has made regarding the implementation of data-driven and outcome-based accountability is presented. As detailed in the previous section, FYSB has employed core outcome domains, performance standards, logic models, and other methods to ensure its RHY discretionary grant programs and the organizations receiving the grants are making progress toward becoming more data driven and outcome based. The journey to reach the destination is complex, multifaceted, multi-phased, and developmental in nature. Establishing the foundation and operational norms for development of data-driven and outcome-based accountability realistically takes several years. Essential features and procedures need to be established and then institutionalized. For example, features such as outcomes, performance standards, logic models, and associated elements must be effectively communicated and commonly understood among FYSB staff and the entire RHY grantee community. A data information system must be operational for data entry, retrieval, and analysis purposes. The RHY-HMIS needs to have normal system implementation kinks and problems resolved as it continues to develop and mature through stages to become sufficiently refined and robust. Grantees need to advance their capacity and capabilities to enter timely and accurate data. FYSB staff need to work closely with grantees to ensure they improve their abilities to submit quality data. The design of data information system reports needs to be reviewed and revised over time to make sure findings can inform and strengthen data-driven and outcome-based accountability. Meeting these accountability standards will help ensure FYSB can formulate bureau-specific and RHY grantee improvement strategies.

The RHY Homeless Management Information System

FYSB’s RHY grantees enter RHY-HMIS data through software utilized by their local or regional CoCs for the homeless. RHY grantees began entering data into the RHY-HMIS in FY 2015,

having previously utilized a freestanding management information system. While not providing a comprehensive picture of all homeless youth (e.g., those triaged to, or served by, adult shelters) the move to a local HMIS (within the HUD system of standards) better assists RHY grantees, other service providers to the homeless, and their communities understand the prevalence, characteristics, service utilization, and outcomes of youth served by RHY programs. The move has the potential to inform local and national policies and practices and accelerate efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness. In FY 2016, human trafficking questions to include sex and labor trafficking were added to the RHY-HMIS data standards to ensure high-risk youth and trafficked youth can be identified effectively through our programs.

As the product of a nascent data management system, with the first upload of data to FYSB occurring during the timeframe covered in this Report to Congress, it must be emphasized that the data, the reports generating the data discussed in this section, and the RHY-HMIS are best understood as all part of the major data-driven and outcome-based developmental process discussed above. While the information presented may be subject to adjustments as the accuracy and validity of the system improve over time with operational and practice enhancement, the data shared for the BCP, TLP, and SOP discretionary grant program descriptions that follow are best seen as illustrative of the scope and nature of RHY, their needs and experiences, and the services they are receiving. As enhancements and improvements to the RHY-HMIS are implemented, stronger year-to-year data will help define a stronger baseline (RHY demographics, needs, services received, and outcomes) and will permit meaningful trend analysis over time.

This section is organized to describe progress in relation to each RHY discretionary funding stream. RHY-HMIS data for demographic characteristics of youth being served, services provided to them, and certain operational elements that are determined to have sufficient accuracy are presented. In situations where there are certain caveats tied to the presented data, the caveats are discussed. Moreover, issues that still require attention, including ongoing dilemmas with grantee data entry behavior, the HMIS data system, and data quality, are also discussed. Actions FYSB is undertaking to resolve the issues are also presented.

Basic Center Program

FYSB funds grants to community-based public and nonprofit private agencies (and combinations of such entities) to establish and operate local centers to provide services for RHY and for their families. Services include the provision of outreach, crisis intervention, temporary shelter, counseling, family unification, and aftercare services. BCP projects serve youth under 18 years of age and can provide up to 21 days of shelter.

The primary goal of each BCP project is to provide temporary shelter and counseling services to youth under the age of 18 who have left home without the permission of their parents or guardians, have been forced to leave home, or who are homeless and who might end up involved with law enforcement or the child welfare, mental health, or juvenile justice systems. The BCP was devised as an alternative to RHY becoming involved in those systems.

Funding Focus

BCP projects are designed and intended to increase young people's access to safe and stable housing; foster connections to school and employment; enhance social and emotional well-being; promote self-sufficiency; and help them build permanent connections with families,

communities, schools, and other positive social networks, as stipulated in the BCP performance standards set forth in the RHY Final Rule (effective January 2017).

There are several federal requirements and guidelines applicable to the implementation and operation of any BCP. Pursuant to section 311(a)(2) of the Act, projects will include “(i) safe and appropriate shelter provided for not to exceed 21 days; and (ii) individual, family, and group counseling, as appropriate.” Projects may include street-based services, home-based services for families with youth at risk of separation from the family, drug abuse education and prevention services, and, at the request of RHY, testing for sexually transmitted diseases.

Section 302(3) of the Act states: “Congress finds that services to such young people should be developed and provided using a PYD approach that ensures a young person a sense of:

- Safety and structure;
- Belonging and membership;
- Self-worth and social contribution;
- Independence and control over one’s life; and
- Closeness in interpersonal relationships.”

The Act also requires that each project operates a center in an area that is frequented by, or easily reachable by, RHY and provides temporary shelter that has “a maximum capacity of not more than 20 youth, except where the [project]. . . has a state or local law or regulation that requires a higher maximum to comply with licensure requirements.” Grantees must ensure that all shelters they operate are licensed and determine that any shelters to which they regularly refer clients have evidence of current licensure in states or localities with licensure requirements. Projects must also ensure collaboration through partner relationships with law enforcement personnel, health and mental healthcare personnel, social service personnel, school system personnel, and welfare personnel.

Additionally, though centers can provide temporary shelter for up to 21 days with FYSB funding for youth, they may also seek to reunite young people with their families when possible and appropriate, or to locate appropriate, alternative placements.

In addition, the RHY Final Rule states:

- RHY grant services should have a PYD approach, which will utilize and integrate into the operation of their projects the principles of PYD, including healthy messages, safe and structured places, adult role models, skill development, and opportunities to serve others;
- Projects shall ensure that youth receive counseling services that are trauma informed and match the individual needs of each client; and
- [As part of the service plan requirement,] projects should incorporate the use of trauma-informed, evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions.

BCP Data and Outcome Progress

Data reflecting an estimate of the total number of youth being served, the demographics of youth being served by BCP grants, a description of the full range of services provided to them, and data elements tied to their entry and exit from BCP-funded projects are presented below.

Youth Served by BCP Grantees

In FY 2016, there were 291 BCP grantees and cumulatively they provided shelter (up to 21 days) for 29,540 youth. They also delivered nonresidential prevention services for an additional 7,561 youth at risk of running away or being homeless. In FY 2017, 295 BCP grantees provided shelter for 21,288 youth and prevention services for an additional 9,554 youth. Table 1 details the demographics of youth being served by BCP grantees.

Table 1. Youth Served by Basic Center Program Grantees

	% (#) of Youth, FY 2016 ^a	% (#) of Youth, FY 2017 ^b
GENDER	N = 28,182	N = 28,818
Female	48% (13,620)	47.4% (13,795)
Male	40% (11,366)	39.7% (11,567)
Unknown	11.3% (3,196)	11.9% (3,456)
RACE	N = 28,396	N = 29,106
American Indian	2.7% (761)	2.25% (645)
Asian	0.9% (255)	0.9% (249)
Black or African American	31% (8,790)	28.5% (8,299)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.5% (131)	0.6% (167)
White	46.5% (13,191)	47.4% (13,804)
Multiracial	4.9% (1,398)	5.4% (1,576)
Not provided	13.6% (3,870)	15% (4,366)
ETHNICITY	N = 28,386	N = 29,106
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	68.1% (19,336)	66% (19,210)
Hispanic/Latino	18.8% (5,334)	19.4% (5,649)
Not provided	13.1% (3,726)	14.6% (4,247)
AGE	N = 26,671	N = 26,278
11 or younger	5.5% (1,475)	8.5% (2,223)
12	5.4% (1,442)	5.7% (1,506)
13	9% (2,419)	9.5% (2,492)
14	13.5% (3,607)	12.2% (3,205)
15	17.2% (4,586)	15.7% (4,129)
16	18.7% (4,980)	17% (4,526)
17	17.8% (4,752)	17.2% (4,507)
Unknown	12.8% (3,410)	14% (3,690)

^a N = 28,396 youth with valid demographic data entered in the 2016 Runaway and Homeless Youth-Homeless Management Information System.

^b N = 29,106 youth with valid demographic data entered in the 2017 Runaway and Homeless Youth-Homeless Management Information System.

The table suggests there were slightly more females than males, with the greatest number of youths being ages 15 to 17. Black/African American youth (at 28.5–31 percent) appeared overrepresented for both years in comparison to the national youth population as a whole (14 percent). The data is consistent with the research discussed in Section 1. In contrast, the 19 percent of youth in BCP programs who were Latino suggests they may be underrepresented in terms of being served by BCPs since Latino youth will likely make up 23 percent of the projected 2020 U.S. population (Federal Interagency Forum Census estimates). Nearly 9 percent of the youth served identified as LGBTQ.

It should be pointed out that the number of youths with demographic data was lower than the total enrollments for both BCP shelter and BCP prevention services. This may indicate missing data and that not all youth served were willing to provide their information to enter in the demographic section of the RHY-HMIS. Also, the total number of youths enrolled appears to be inconsistent with other total figures (e.g., exits) discussed below. New data tracking and management systems typically require revisions to strengthen data validity and resolve discrepancies, and the source of these discrepancies is being reviewed and addressed as part of FYSB's ongoing RHY-HMIS development process. This effort includes a continuous review of the quality and utility of data and data reports, the identification of error sources (programming, users, etc.), and the design, implementation, and testing of error revision strategies.

BCP Services Provided to Youth

FYSB is taking steps to see that the RHY-HMIS is able to generate reliable and valid data regarding BCP service provision. For purposes of this Report to Congress, it is important to delineate some of the critical BCP services and how they are delivered.

BCP projects stabilize RHY by addressing their immediate needs for shelter, food, and clothing and by coordinating access to health care and mental health services. Consistent with the Act and Final Rule, as well as demonstrated effective approaches and promising practices, the scope of their services includes providing shelter, gateway services, assessment, coordinated case management, aftercare services, and continuum services. BCP project staff are expected to use a trauma-informed approach to find safe and stable places for young people to live. Because the projects provide short-term, residential services for a maximum of 21 days of shelter under FYSB funding, intensive work is required to identify barriers to safe and stable housing, resolve family conflicts (when it is safe and appropriate for the youth to return home), or identify alternative housing with relatives, friends, or a longer-term program, such as the TLP projects discussed later in this report.

Young people's need for shelter may be addressed either through a group setting in an emergency shelter facility or through a host home in the community. In the host home model, youth live with families who have volunteered to house them. In each type of BCP project, staff or families make sure the youth's basic needs are met and provide requisite support and supervision. Shelters are the predominant model, with a small number of programs utilizing host homes.

In some cases, BCP projects are able to keep young people from leaving home at all. RHY-HMIS data indicate that approximately 30 percent of youth receive runaway prevention services such as mediation, family, and/or individual counseling. These data further indicate that most of the young people who receive prevention services do not go into shelters. BCP projects may work with families to help them manage conflict and establish healthy patterns of family interaction. This may take as few as 2 or 3 days, or as long as several months (during aftercare, as programs are limited to 21 days of shelter).

Consistent with the authorizing legislation, all BCP projects also provide case management and counseling services to assist RHY with the underlying issues that can cause or contribute to homelessness and running away. These services typically include screening and assessment, mental health and substance abuse counseling, and family-related counseling and conflict resolution.

FYSB provides grantees and other providers serving RHY with a list of evidence-based, evidence-informed, and promising screening and assessment tools. BCP projects may use any

number of tools, such as the Trauma Symptom Inventory or the Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory, to identify youth who are dependent on drugs. Based on screening results, assessment tools, such as the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths mental health instrument, can be utilized to provide more detailed information on a youth's needs. These results can also lead case managers to work with the youth to set individual, personalized goals for their participation in the program. For example, goals might be to "see a mental health counselor" or to "reenroll in school."

Additionally, when trained mental health and substance use counselors/clinicians are onsite, counseling is provided within the BCP project. Otherwise, projects may refer youth to outside mental health and substance abuse service providers. BCP project counselors use interventions rooted in evidence-based models such as the cognitive behavioral therapy model, which has been shown to be effective in helping youth overcome depression, anxiety, trauma, and addictive or dependency behaviors.

Physical and dental healthcare needs are addressed in addition to mental health. While a few programs have medical staff onsite or travelling medical staff who visit the program to provide services, most BCP projects collaborate with community health providers. Staff can also assist youth and families in applying for Medicaid when they are eligible.

RHY grantees, including BCP grantees, have historically operated as part of a continuum of youth services, connecting youth who often avoid going directly to healthcare providers for a variety of reasons, including a mistrust of health, social, and justice systems.

Developing and maintaining strong working relationships with both public and private service providers reduces barriers and allows more services to be offered than what the BCP project can provide on its own. More recently, this also includes participating in the local HUD-funded CoCs. The CoC Program promotes community-wide planning and the strategic use of resources to address homelessness by improving coordination and integration with mainstream resources and other programs targeting people experiencing homelessness, improving data collection and performance measurement, and allowing each community to tailor its programs to the particular strengths and challenges within that community. BCP projects (as well as TLP and MGH projects, described in the following subsections of this report) are encouraged to partner with their local CoC.

Unfortunately, not all communities have a strong continuum of services. Some programs, especially those in rural areas, have difficulty connecting youth to health care because those services are scarce in their regions. In addition, coordinated entry efforts by CoCs have not traditionally included access for children and youth unless sheltered with their family, although there are opportunities to change this through funding streams such as HUD's Youth Homeless Demonstration Project (begun in FY 2016). Other areas may have few housing opportunities or none available to youth outside of their family. Still, effective collaboration is essential in helping RHY access the services that are available, including mental health and substance abuse services.

Education, engagement, or reengagement with local school systems is critical to the future success of youth as wage earners and thus to their being able to secure safe and stable housing in their transition to adulthood. FYSB requires RHY Program grantees to develop strong working relationships with the school district liaisons responsible for advocating on behalf of homeless youth, as specified under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The McKinney-Vento Act mandates immediate access to public schools for homeless youth, and the school district

liaisons are a vital link in connecting youth with their “school of origin,” which is the school that a youth attended when permanently housed, the school in which the youth was last enrolled, or the local school serving the community where the youth will be living after leaving the BCP.

The staff of BCP grantees go beyond just making the connection to schools. They also typically ensure transportation, monitor school attendance and performance, develop and implement support strategies like tutoring, and actively engage teachers and parents to support educational planning. Staff may be part of a youth’s Individualized Education Program team. Some programs also provide work-readiness training and job-search assistance for youth who have completed school or are otherwise no longer eligible for public educational services.

Approximately 7 in 10 youth in BCP shelters (71.8 percent in FY 2016 and 70.1 percent in FY 2017) attended school regularly, graduated from high school, or obtained their general education diploma or other high school equivalency by the time they exited the program.

BCP Discharge Planning Follow-Up and Aftercare

Data suggest over 90 percent (91.5 percent) of youth discharged from BCPs in FY 2016 went to a safe, stable setting (safe exit), and the reported number remained relatively stable in FY 2017 at 90.7 percent. Here again, data interpretation and entry are being examined to assess why the total number of exits is approximately 6,000 below the total number enrolled, since all youth who enrolled must also exit.

While the discrepancies across various RHY-HMIS totals are analyzed and resolution strategies are developed and implemented, safe exits remain as the priority outcome to keep RHY off the street and reduce their risk of harm. Discharge planning begins at intake. Because BCP projects can only provide shelter through FYSB funding for up to 21 days (though they may use a different funding source to support longer stays in the RHY shelter), case managers immediately involve youth and their families—where feasible and appropriate—in discharge planning so that youth can actively take steps to feel safe and secure and avoid future trauma. This approach, consistent with the PYD framework, engages youth as partners in the planning and implementation of services. For discharge and aftercare, this means youth work with case managers and family members and mentors, as appropriate, to create an exit plan responsive to needs and aspirations. Exit or discharge plans address the following: where the youth will live and alternatives if their first choice is unavailable; how youth will stay connected and engaged in school; how they will continue the connections to community resources, mentors, and positive adult role models established while at the shelter; and how to access additional community resources, such as long-term counseling and employment training. Youth participating in BCP projects also explore and apply for government assistance (such as housing assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP] benefits, and supplemental food vouchers for parenting teens) with help from their case managers.

Just as youth work with BCP project staff to plan their actions and responsibilities upon leaving the program, FYSB requires each grantee to develop an aftercare plan for each youth to ensure continuity and supportive follow-up. The plan, which must be developed by the time a youth leaves the program, ensures the youth’s ongoing safety and access to services, addresses what services will be provided to the youth and their family where appropriate, and documents their housing status. BCP grantees develop and implement the aftercare plan, which must cover at least 3 months. Many programs provide aftercare for much longer periods, which is vital in service-poor communities. Staff record the rate of participation in aftercare and completion of the services in the plan.

Transitional Living Program/Maternity Group Home

The TLP/MGH programs are an important funding stream responding to the needs and aspirations of RHY. Pursuant to the Act, TLP projects must “establish, strengthen, or fund a transitional living youth project for homeless youth [and] develop an adequate plan to ensure proper referral of homeless youth to social service, law enforcement, educational (including postsecondary education), vocational, training (including services and programs for youth available under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 [or most recently, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Pub. L. 113-128], welfare (including programs under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996), legal service, and healthcare programs and to help integrate and coordinate such services for youths.”

TLP/MGH projects must provide “homeless youth shelter (such as group homes, including maternity group homes, host family homes, and supervised apartments) and services (including information and counseling services in basic life skills, which shall include money management, budgeting, consumer education, and use of credit, parenting skills [as appropriate], interpersonal skill building, educational advancement, job attainment skills, and mental and physical health care) to homeless youth.”

The RHY Final Rule requires MGH projects to provide parenting skills, child care, and child nutrition services. MGH projects are also required to have parenting curricula that detail prenatal, postnatal, infant, and toddler care, including nutrition, safety, early learning, health, child care, emotional support, stress reduction, and family engagement strategies.

Funding Focus

The primary goal of any TLP/MGH funding stream is to help RHY who are at least 16 years old and under the age of 22 establish sustainable living and well-being for themselves and, if applicable, their dependent child(ren). Similar to BCP projects, TLP/MGH projects are designed and intended to help young people realize improvements in the four core domains. For TLP/MGH projects, this includes:

- **Social and emotional well-being:** Youth or pregnant and parenting youth will connect to system-of-care providers to assist with physical health, dental health, and mental health.
- **Permanent connections:** Youth or pregnant and parenting youth will experience ongoing attachments to families, communities, schools, and other social networks. For the purposes of the MGH, pregnant and/or parenting youth have developed healthy family engagement strategies and co-parenting skills.
- **Education or employment:** Youth or pregnant and parenting youth will connect to school, including postsecondary education or a vocational training program, improvement in interviewing skills, job attainment skills, and employment.
- **Safe and stable housing:** Youth or pregnant and parenting youth and their dependent child(ren) will transition to safe and stable housing that appropriately matches their level of need after leaving a TLP/MGH, to include rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, moving in with family, residential treatment center, or substance abuse treatment facility.

In addition to meeting the four core outcome domains, the RHY Final Rule requires TLP/MGH projects to ensure that youth are engaged in educational advancement, job attainment skills, or

work activities while in the program. MGH projects need to ensure and report that youth receive consistent prenatal care and, for the infant, well-baby exams and immunizations while in the program. Finally, each TLP/MGH projects must ensure youth have safe and appropriate exits when leaving the program.

TLP/MGH Data and Outcome Progress

Data reflecting an estimate of the total number of youth being served, the demographics of youth being served by TLP/MGH grantees, a description of the full range of services provided to them, and a discussion of their entry and exit from TLP/MGH-funded projects are presented below.

Youth Served by TLP Grantees

There were 209 TLP grantees in FY 2016 and 196 grantees in FY 2017. These grantees provided transitional living shelter and support services for 4,699 youth in FY 2016, increasing to 5,144 youth in FY 2017. More demographic data on this group of RHY are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Youth Served by Transitional Living Program Grantees

	% (#) of Youth, FY 2016	% (#) of Youth, FY 2017
GENDER	N = 4,604	N = 5,013
Female	51.9% (2,432)	51.5% (2,645)
Male	34.2% (1,605)	36.3% (1,863)
Unknown	12.1% (567)	9.8% (505)
RACE	N = 4,687	N = 5,135
American Indian	2.5% (117)	2.6% (136)
Asian	0.7% (34)	0.6% (30)
Black or African American	37.3% (1,750)	37.2% (1,910)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.4% (18)	0.4% (23)
White	38.3% (1,794)	40.4% (2,076)
Multiracial	6.7% (312)	7.5% (387)
Not provided	14.1% (662)	11.2% (573)
ETHNICITY	N = 4,687	N = 5,135
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	72.5% (3,398)	75.4% (3,873)
Hispanic/Latino	14.6% (685)	14% (717)
Not provided	12.9% (604)	10.6% (545)
AGE	N = 4,524	N = 4,786
16	2.9% (137)	3.9% (202)
17	8.6% (402)	9.2% (467)
18	21.9% (1,020)	18.3% (937)
19	19.3% (900)	18.5% (954)
20	16.7% (777)	17.2% (872)
21	11.5% (533)	10.6% (534)
22	3.4% (159)	4.5% (229)
23	0.9% (43)	1.8% (95)
Unknown*	11.9% (553)	9.8% (496)

* "Unknown" includes youth for whom no age was provided. For example, a youth may not have provided their age at intake.

The demographics data for RHY served by TLP projects points to nearly 20 percent more females than males accessed services, with the greatest number of youths being 18 or 19 years

old. Similar to BCP data, the total number of youths enrolled differed from other totals (e.g., exits), though by very small amounts in some cases.

TLP/MGH Services Provided to Youth

FYSB is taking steps to see that the RHY-HMIS is able to generate reliable and valid data regarding TLP/MGH service provision. For purposes of the Report to Congress, it is important to delineate some of the critical TLP services and how they were delivered.

TLP projects supported the transition of RHY to independent living through safe and stable housing for a continuous period not to exceed 540 days (or, in exceptional circumstances, 635 days). To assure the availability of stable housing, each project must have had an agreement with a youth emergency shelter in circumstances where there were no current TLP openings.

TLP/MGH projects provided direct onsite supervision at each housing facility that is not a family host home) and each must have had a ratio of staff to youth sufficient to ensure all youth receive adequate supervision and services. Each facility had the capacity to accommodate a minimum of four and not more than 20 individuals, excluding staff. Staff are trained to interact with youth victims of trafficking or other similar traumatic experiences. Transportation should be available, as needed, and barriers to entry should be low enough that the building is easily accessible by youth. MGH projects provided a separate bed each for the youth and the infant/child(ren). In addition, the grantee ensured that accommodations limited the risk of or prevented injuries associated with falling, burning, and electrical hazards and provided safe bath and tub space.

TLP/MGH services, designed to help young people who are homeless make a successful transition to sustainable living, include:

- **An outreach plan:** TLP/MGH projects perform outreach in coordination with other organizations serving the same or similar client populations, such as child welfare agencies, juvenile justice systems, schools, and CoCs.
- **Gateway services:** When necessary and appropriate to facilitate the delivery of required TLP/MGH shelter and services, projects must provide food, drink, clothing, personal safety information (e.g., national youth hotlines, local hotlines), transportation, and hygiene products to prevent malnutrition and ill health while building trust with workers in order for the youth to be successful in the program.
- **Screening and assessment:** All projects implement standardized methods to screen and assess each youth's situation at initial program entry. The assessment includes immediate needs, physical health, potential victimization (e.g., sex trafficking, labor trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, sexual assault), behavioral health, connection to family, safety, access to resources, issues of neglect, or abuse and other risk and protective factors impacting well-being and sustainable living. The screening and assessment tools must be able to identify the unique needs and experiences of RHY. Projects complete periodic ongoing assessment to ensure interventions are meeting a youth's needs, particularly if a youth has been homeless for a long period of time. In addition, MGH providers complete a thorough assessment of pregnant and parenting youth and child(ren) in care within 30 days of intake. FYSB provides a list of screening and assessment tools that can be used to decide what types of interventions and services each young person in a TLP/MGH needs.

- **Case management:** TLP/MGH projects must provide intensive case management to youth receiving services. Plans are developed for every youth receiving services; a written individualized service or treatment plan based on the person's goals that include evidence-informed strategies to assist with the trajectory of achieving sustainable living. MGH projects also create a separate file for the young person's infant or child(ren), including (at a minimum) a record of well-care visits, sensory and developmental screenings, and assessments.
- **Service coordination plan:** Projects coordinate with the local HUD-funded CoCs to ensure youth have access to all available resources, including adult mainstream services and youth services. In addition, projects must have a suitable referral plan based on an assessment of youth needs to ensure appropriate system-of-care services are accessible. These services may include social services, law enforcement, educational services, vocational training, welfare, legal services, anti-trafficking agencies, healthcare programs, including health insurance options, affordable child care, and/or child education programs. For MGH purposes, referrals should also include SNAP; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; Childcare; Head Start; the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; and other related family/child support services. Pursuant to the RHY Final Rule, projects will inform the National Runaway Safeline, which operates the RHY National Communication System, about resources and how to connect youth in need with those resources.

Projects also identify and work with agencies that provide appropriate services to youth victims of trafficking.

- **Child Care Plan (For MGH projects):** Child care plans must link youth to safe, affordable, and accessible child care, as well as to early childhood development services so that young parents can complete education and employment goals.
- **Transitional Living Plan:** TLP/MGH projects provide every youth a written TLP that meets their level of need for a safe and stable living environment after program exit. This ensures each youth has access to important documents and paperwork (e.g., birth certificate, Social Security card, driver's license or state identification card, medical records, credit reports).

As discussed under the description of the BCP, education, engagement, or reengagement with local school systems is critical to the future success of youth as wage earners and thus to their being able to secure safe and stable housing in their transition to adulthood. TLP grantees developed strong working relationships with McKinney-Vento liaisons in each school district, as well as assisted youth as they developed greater employability skills (depending on age). More than two-thirds of youth (68.3 percent in FY 2016 and 65.9 percent in FY 2017) in TLP/MGH projects attended school regularly, graduated from high school, or obtained their general education diploma or other high school equivalency by the time they exited the program during the years covered in this report. And, more than three-quarters of youth (78.3 percent in FY 2016 and 75.7 percent in FY 2017) were employed or looking for work.

TLP/MGH Discharge Planning Follow-Up and Aftercare

TLP/MGH projects develop and implement an aftercare plan for a minimum of 3 months to stay in contact with youth who left the project. This approach to discharge and follow-up intends to ensure the youth's ongoing safety and access to additional services provided beyond the period of

their residential stay. These services include counseling and offer continuity and supportive follow-up to youth served by the program.

There are some gaps with these data, as the total numbers of youth reported appear to be below the demographic data for total youth enrolled. FYSB has speculated how total counts of those served differ across different reporting sections (e.g., entries, enrollment, exits); for example, at data submission, some youth are still in the TLP/MGH program and have not yet exited, and there are youth who involuntarily leave the program when they become a threat to others, staff, and themselves.

Street Outreach Program

The SOP operates as an important funding stream for RHY. Pursuant to the Act, SOP grants are awarded for “the purpose of providing street-based services to RHY, and street youth, who have been subjected to, or are at risk of being subjected to, sexual abuse, prostitution, sexual exploitation, severe forms of trafficking in persons.”

In addition, the RHY Final Rule states that RHY grant services “shall provide services that are designed to assist clients in leaving the streets, making healthy choices, and building trusting relationships in areas where targeted youth congregate; and projects, shall directly or by referral provide treatment, counseling, prevention, and education services to clients as well as referral for emergency shelter.”

Consistent with the statutory mandate set forth in the Act, as well as the regulatory requirements set forth in the RHY Final Rule, SOP projects should:

- Implement outreach intervention strategies to keep youth safe and help them leave the streets;
- Provide approaches to identify and end sexual exploitation and human trafficking situations;
- Coordinate and sustain partnerships in order to expand access to services that respond to the needs of youth experiencing homelessness;
- Establish and/or strengthen the integration of comprehensive services that enhance protective factors;
- Provide preventive services that enhance protective factors, such as connection to schools, vocational services, friends, and caring adults; and
- Identify and provide services to youth who are victims of any type of sexual victimization and severe forms of human trafficking.

Funding Focus

The primary goal of SOP projects is to provide street-based services to runaway, homeless, and street youth younger than 21 years of age who have been subjected to, or are at risk of being subjected to, sexual abuse, prostitution, sexual exploitation, and severe forms of trafficking in persons.

SOP Data and Outcomes Progress

Data reflecting the demographics of youth being served by SOP grantees, and a description of the full range of services provided to them, are presented below.

Youth Served by SOP Grantees

There were 96 SOP grantees in FY 2016 providing services to 31,475 youth and 94 grantees in FY 2017 providing services for 30,589 youth. Table 3 provides the demographic details on the youth. The RHY-HMIS data suggested nearly 10 percent more males than females were served by SOP grantees, with the greatest number of youths being 18 to 19 years old.

Table 3. Youth Served by Street Outreach Program Grantees

	% (#) of Youth, FY 2016	% (#) of Youth, FY 2017
GENDER	N = 30,909	N = 30,021
Female	32% (10,074)	29.8% (9,108)
Male	41.7% (13,134)	35.5% (10,871)
Unknown	24.7% (7,781)	32.8% (10,042)
RACE	N = 31,475	N = 30,589
American Indian	2% (617)	2.9% (893)
Asian	0.8% (241)	0.8% (249)
Black or African American	27.6% (8,697)	25.2% (7,721)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.4% (138)	0.4% (131)
White	32.4% (10,189)	27.3% (8,354)
Multiracial	4.2% (1,314)	3.6% (1,115)
Not provided	32.7% (10,279)	39.6% (12,126)
ETHNICITY	N = 31,475	N = 30,589
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	53.4% (16,804)	45.6% (13,943)
Hispanic/Latino	12.3% (3,880)	12.3% (3,770)
Not provided	34.3% (10,791)	42.1% (12,876)
AGE	N = 27,253	N = 27,107
11 or younger	1.8% (500)	1.8% (482)
12	1.3% (346)	0.5% (137)
13	1.9% (507)	1.2% (335)
14	4.2% (1,134)	1.7% (455)
15	4.7% (1,273)	2.5% (691)
16	5.6% (1,515)	4.7% (1,284)
17	7.4% (2,019)	5.6% (1,518)
18	10.9% (2,958)	9.9% (2,678)
19	12.2% (3,322)	10.2% (2,765)
20	14% (3,820)	10.4% (2,808)
21	11% (3,007)	9.9% (2,685)
Unknown	25% (6,852)	41.6% (11,269)

A known issue with the SOP age data was the unknown status of up to 41 percent of the youth reported on. Also, consistent with BCP and TLP data, SOP totals, representing total numbers of youth enrolled, differed from other totals (e.g., exits).

SOP Services Provided to Youth

FYSB is taking steps to see that the RHY-HMIS can generate reliable and valid data regarding SOP service provision. For example, while the large number of “unknowns” cited above reflects the nature of street outreach (where many youth are known only through brief informal contacts, and only a percentage of total contacts receive longer-term services, with the transient nature of these youth resulting in grantees having limited information on the youth to enter into the RHY-

HMIS), SOP staff training and support increasingly focuses on more effective engagement with street contacts, which in turn can lead to more complete data.

For purposes of this Report to Congress, it is important to delineate some of the critical SOP services and how they are delivered. SOP projects are required to follow a Comprehensive Youth-Centered Service Model that includes, but is not limited to:

- **Outreach:** Projects conduct continual, intense, individualized engagement with runaway, homeless, and street youth who are indefinitely or intermittently on the street or spending significant time on the street, therefore increasing the chance of becoming victims of sexual exploitation or human trafficking. Pursuant to the RHY Final Rule, grantees must perform outreach in coordination with other organizations serving the same or similar client populations, such as child welfare agencies, juvenile justice systems, schools, and HUD-funded CoCs. In addition, projects must have an outreach implementation strategy, including a street outreach plan and public outreach and awareness.

Projects must have a street outreach plan that outlines where staff will conduct individualized, face-to-face outreach to youth in places where they congregate on the streets for certain hours, with a defined frequency of visits. The plan must include general areas and general locations, as well as the techniques staff will use as branding and for carrying basic need packs, employing street outreach workers, and developing street-based safety protocols. This includes protocols and strategies to respond to youth who are victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Projects must have a plan for public outreach and an awareness plan that informs the community about SOPs. This plan must include social media, public service announcements, and collaboration with a range of other youth-serving organizations. These organizations include culturally specific community-based organizations, sexual violence organizations, anti-trafficking agencies, law enforcement, healthcare providers, legal services, and other stakeholders.

- **Gateway services:** Project outreach staff provide food, drink, referrals to shelter, clothing, transportation, and hygiene products to prevent malnutrition and ill health to youth while building trust with youth they encounter on the street. Project outreach staff are also expected to build rapport to identify youth who are at risk of or are victims of sexual trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, labor trafficking, and other forms of victimization. SOP workers are expected to provide valuable information to youth in case of potential trafficking or life-threatening situations (e.g., national and local youth hotline information, including the National Runaway Safeline and National Human Trafficking Hotline).
- **Screening and assessment:** Projects implement standardized methods to assess each youth's situation at drop-in center program entry, during engagement on the street, or during intake screening. Assessments should determine a youth's immediate needs, physical and behavioral health, connection to family, safety, access to resources, issues of neglect or abuse, and other risk and protective factors impacting his/her well-being and self-sufficiency. Assessments must be individualized, returning first-time runaway youth to low-risk families, if appropriate, while prioritizing street youth for rapid sheltering. Assessment tools must also be able to evaluate the unique needs of subpopulations of RHY, such as, but not limited to (1) youth who are pregnant or parenting; (2) system-

involved youth, to include juvenile justice and child welfare; (3) sexually exploited or trafficked youth; (4) youth in need of substance abuse or mental health services; and (5) other vulnerable populations (e.g., Native American youth, youth with disabilities, LGBTQ youth).

- **Harm reduction:** All SOP projects educate and engage youth on the street with regard to safety plans and ways to reduce risk of sexual exploitation, human trafficking, sexual assault, or any other harm associated with street life.
- **Access to emergency shelter:** Projects must guarantee RHY access to emergency shelter or safe and stable housing on a 24-hour-a-day basis. The shelter services must have a vacancy for referred youth and must be licensed, supervised, and age appropriate with an atmosphere youth will trust. Transportation to the shelter should be available as needed and barriers to entry should be low enough that it is easily accessible by youth.
- **Crisis stabilization:** SOP projects must provide intensive case management and follow-up services to ensure that youth receive assistance with emotional and behavioral health challenges while developing a plan for permanency. Services must be designed to assist clients in leaving the streets, making healthy choices, and building trusting relationships in areas where targeted youth congregate. SOP projects must provide treatment, counseling, prevention, and education services directly, or by referral, to clients who are referred for emergency shelter.
- **Continuum service linkages:** Grantee projects must coordinate with system-of-care providers to ensure the ability to serve the homeless youth population. Pursuant to the RHY Final Rule, projects must also coordinate their activities with the National Runaway Safeline.
- **Follow-up:** Projects must provide follow-up care to youth, including, but not limited to, care visits, calls, and any form of open and active communication.
- **Drop-in center (optional services):** If projects propose this service, youths must be able to access services such as showers, hot meals, laundry, email, phone, and case management services.

Additionally, RHY SOPs will identify and provide street-based services to youth victims of trafficking. SOPs are required to increase their capacity to identify and provide services and/or service referrals to trafficked youth by participating in professional trainings and integrating human trafficking elements (sex and labor trafficking) into screening and assessment tools. SOPs are encouraged to enhance their human trafficking prevention and intervention efforts to end these incidents among vulnerable youth and identify trafficked youth.⁷

Illustrative Initial Outcome Data Across RHY Discretionary Grant Programs

In addition to the numbers of youth served, demographic data, and service provision-related data detailed for each RHY discretionary funding program, RHY BCP and TLP grantees collect and report data on key outcomes using RHY-HMIS. It must be reemphasized that the data presented in this Report to Congress must be seen as initial, derived from the first 2 FYs of the new data

⁷ Discharge Planning and Aftercare Services do not apply to SOP projects.

management system being implemented. FYSB has already taken steps, and continues to take action, to address the range of issues that always accompany the introduction of a new data management system for federal grantees. These data points will be subject to revision as the system is further developed and a data quality protocol is established (e.g., completeness and validity). It is important to note that FYSB can only make changes to the HMIS data standards every 2 years and those changes are limited as they require significant programming by over 40 vendors across all CoCs and for the other federal programs (e.g., the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs). Therefore, the data in this report are the first attempts to illustrate the types of outcome data that are available through the RHY-HMIS. Over the next couple of years, as the range of identified data quality issues are addressed and resolved, outcome data will begin to be of higher quality. As the RHY-HMIS data system matures, definitional matters are identified and reconciled and RHY grantees become more adept and fluent with data collection and data entry, the improved accuracy and robustness of the data will continue to improve. Once reliable and valid data are confirmed based on data submission, FYSB will be positioned to produce higher-quality baseline data and can then more effectively measure progress toward outcome targets (e.g., increase in percentage of youth with safe exits over time).

For purposes of this report, examples of data illuminating RHY grantees' progress in relation to certain outcome targets are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Illustrative Initial RHY Discretionary Grant Outcomes

	FY 2016	FY 2017	TARGET
SAFE EXITS (youth leaving program to safe and stable housing)			
BCP (includes reunited with family)	90.5% (25,526)	90.7% (20,150)	90%
TLP	90% (2,728)	90.7% (2,829)	90%
EDUCATIONAL STATUS AT EXIT (youth who are attending school, have graduated, or obtained a GED or the equivalent)			
BCP	71.8% (17,258)	70.1% (14,065)	70%
TLP	68.3% (1,862)	65.9% (1,926)	65%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS AT EXIT (youth who are employed or looking for work)			
BCP	15.8% (4,136)	18.9% (3,970)	15%
TLP	78.3% (2,311)	75.7% (2,264)	70%

Note. BCP = Basic Center Program; GED = General Educational Development certificate; RHY = runaway and homeless youth; TLP = Transitional Living Program. Shaded cells represent fields where the target was met or exceeded.

The illustrative initial data for the 2 FYs covered in this Report to Congress, given all the normal challenges and limitations associated with the start-up period for instituting a data management system, suggested that outcome targets have been met or exceeded by BCP and TLP grantees for three key outcomes: safe exits, educational status at exit, and employment status at exit. For BCP grantees, the targets were met or exceeded for safe exits and educational status.

SECTION 3: Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability Approaches: Program Performance-Monitoring Progress

FYSB employs several review and oversight strategies to monitor RHY discretionary grantee performance. The strategies strengthen FYSB's ongoing efforts to ensure a more data-driven and outcome-based approach for bureau and grantee accountability.

Standard Program Performance-Monitoring Procedures

FYSB conducts a comprehensive monitoring process for all RHY discretionary grantees comprised of procedures to confirm that grantee operations and service provision are consistent with (1) legislative mandates, (2) HHS and FYSB administrative requirements, (3) the requirements of FOAs for each respective RHY discretionary program, and (4) the commitments made by each grantee in their approved grant application. The grantee monitoring process includes multiple activities throughout each FY for each grantee. FYSB federal project officers (FPOs) conduct ongoing desk monitoring (including monthly contact with grantees to track their progress) for each grant in their portfolio, review the semiannual program performance reports, and work together with peer monitors to conduct onsite monitoring and review visits.

All FYSB FPOs are expected to make monthly contact by phone with a variety of staff from each of their grantees. During the calls, they discuss progress in program implementation; share best practices, promising approaches, and lessons learned; identify any barriers or challenges the program is facing; and suggest possible TA resources to address the barriers.

In addition, The Act requires onsite grantee reviews every 3 years. These onsite monitoring and review visits are conducted to:

- Ensure compliance with grant requirements and with associated legislation and policy;
- Conduct evaluations of each grantee by collecting information on project status, activities, accomplishments, and challenges;
- Assist RHY grantees by providing information and TA to improve RHY facilities, project implementation, and project activities; and
- Identify promising and emerging practices among grantees that can be shared with the field, in order to strengthen services to RHY and improve resulting outcomes.

Each year, grantees are chosen for onsite review to ensure they are evaluated within the required 3-year period. Onsite visits are prioritized according to which projects are most in need of or would most benefit from the visit based on monthly contacts with grantees and other ongoing desk monitoring. A grantee may also be subject to a visit in response to identified conditions that could jeopardize the health, safety, or well-being of RHY, or because of serious programmatic, operational, and/or financial irregularities. An onsite visit typically encompasses a monitoring review of all the RHY grants the grantee has received and currently operates (e.g., a BCP and a TLP, or two BCPs).

Since the early 1990s, FYSB has utilized a peer review model for onsite monitoring and review visits, which are usually conducted by a review team consisting of an FPO (who has primary responsibility for all monitoring) paired with a peer monitor (PM) who has substantial

experience as an RHY grantee. Peer monitoring is designed to assist FPOs with crucial oversight dimensions such as: assessing compliance issues; targeting areas where TA is needed; identifying administrative and programmatic strengths, including emerging and promising practices that may be shared with RHY grantees; and making suggestions that would enhance RHY grantee projects. The FPO and PM work as a team in planning, implementing, and following up on each onsite visit. The key onsite activities are illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Key Onsite Activities



During FY 2016 and FY 2017, a protocol implemented in 2009 for conducting onsite reviews was the primary tool used to assess grantee performance. The protocol served as the basis for the final report for each monitoring visit. The protocol details the actions that are required to resolve area(s) of noncompliance and for which the grantee must develop a corrective action plan (CAP). The CAP specifies actions that will be taken to correct the noncompliance issues, as well as a timetable for their anticipated resolution. Follow-up visits are conducted as needed to ensure completion of actions stipulated in the CAP and provide additional TA. In rare circumstances, there may be significant compliance issues that cannot be resolved through a CAP, and the FPO can recommend that the grantee will voluntarily relinquish its grant.

New Program Performance-Monitoring Procedures

FYSB implemented several improvements related to its performance-monitoring process and procedures during the reporting period covered by this Report to Congress. Three RPMs were hired between July and October of 2016 to provide a higher level of supervision and management of the FPOs across the 10 federal regions. Each RPM assumed responsibility for one of three regional clusters. Regions 1, 2, 3, and 6 constitute one cluster; Regions 4, 5, and 7 a second cluster; and Regions 8, 9, and 10 the third. The RPMs and FYSB leadership worked together to develop new tools and procedural guides through the efforts of staff workgroups facilitated by subject matter experts. FYSB expects these improvements to be fully implemented in FY 2018.

One of the new tools developed is the Monthly Contact Form (MCF). The MCF is designed to facilitate timely completion of monthly contacts and standardizes the information gathered from grantees during those contacts. FYSB developed revised monthly reporting procedures, including the use of the MCF, to routinize the monthly contacts made by each FPO to each grantee and to standardize the collection of information from each RHY grantee. A new related procedure includes pulling monitoring data for the MCF directly from the Peer Monitoring Data Management System (PMDMS).

Another new tool, the Onsite Monitoring Instrument (OMI), was also developed during the reporting period and was also scheduled to be fully implemented during FY 2018. The revised OMI intends to ensure greater consistency and accuracy among reviewers by standardizing monitoring questions and checklists. Streamlined questions and online access through the PMDMS will reduce the time required to complete the onsite review process. In addition to increased efficiency, the OMI provides for the reporting of results in much greater detail than was previously possible. Also, the completed OMIs will serve as the basis for the FPOs' Onsite Monitoring Report, which summarizes the results for each review.

The Onsite Monitoring Report was revised in FY 2017. It identifies program strengths and concerns and includes:

- Findings of noncompliance in any area such as a federal statute, regulations, policy, rules, terms, or other program requirements that require corrective action;
- Opportunities for improvement that may affect program performance and effectiveness, but which do not require any formal actions;
- Emerging practices, including unique and innovative approaches or solutions that have resulted in positive outcomes for the RHY population; and
- Promising practices, including unique and innovative approaches or solutions with strong qualitative or quantitative evidence of program effectiveness.

Program Performance-Monitoring Procedures Data

Summary performance-monitoring data for each FY covered in the report is presented below. The data show the scope of grantee reviews, the results of the reviews, the types of issues that emerged, and follow-up monitoring steps taken.

For the 597 total RHY grants in FY 2016:

- There were 149 grantees reviewed, with nearly half (72) being BCP recipients;
- Compliance issues were identified in seven grantee projects (less than 5 percent);
- Each of the grantees with identified issues required a CAP;
- A follow-up visit was required for fiscal issues with one grantee (less than 1 percent);
- A follow-up visit was required for non-fiscal issues with two grantees (1 percent); and
- Post-visit T&TA was provided to four grantees.

For the 595 total RHY grants in FY 2017:

- There were 92 grantees reviewed, with more than half (48) being BCP recipients;
- Compliance issues were identified in four grantee projects (4 percent);
- Three of the four programs with identified issues required a CAP; not all compliance issues resulted in CAPs, as the issue might have been fixed at the time of the review or prior to submission of the review report to the grantee;
- No follow-up visits were required for fiscal issues;
- A follow-up visit was required for non-fiscal issues with two grantees (2 percent); and
- Post-visit T&TA was not required for any of the grantees reviewed.

While the new OMI was not in place during FY 2016 and FY 2017, FYSB analyzed the onsite monitoring visits conducted in FY 2017 and FY 2018 and identified promising and emerging practices implemented across multiple grantees in an internal report. A “promising practice” is one with strong qualitative and/or quantitative evidence of effectiveness that incorporates a unique and/or innovative approach and/or solution that is having a positive impact within the RHY population. An “emerging practice” is one that incorporates a unique and/or innovative approach and/or solution that is developing positive outcomes within the RHY population. Below are some of the key themes that apply to FY 2017 for promising and emerging practices.

Promising Practices

Personnel and staffing

- Previous RHY Program participants serve as peer outreach workers;
- New staff receive a minimum of 40 hours of orientation and training, which includes content beyond the RHY requirements (e.g., staff training in unconscious bias and youth worker certification); and
- Staff files include employee training checklist as well as signed supervision meeting checklists.

PYD and life skills

- Healthier meal choices (meal preparation, reading labels, Veggie Mobile);
- Youth opportunities to volunteer at recreation summer programs or food pantries; and
- Punch card system for life skills sessions, towards a gift card.

Intake, case management, and counseling

- Computerized records management systems; and
- Use of the Attachment, Regulation and Competency (ARC) framework in treating traumatic stress in children and adolescents.

Aftercare

- Stronger aftercare documentation including a Release of Custody agreement when the youth is discharged from services.

Community partnerships

- Enhanced network of community partners able to raise money through outside contacts;
- Stronger relationships with local law enforcement to help police officers modify their approach to youth on the street; and
- Local recreational venues that allow free passes for youth during times that school is not in session.

Outreach

- Access to high schools to provide direct outreach to youth;
- Bilingual and multilingual outreach materials;
- Street outreach expands to include woods, encampments, and tent cities; and
- Greater use of social media to reach and engage youth.

Emerging Practices

Staff development and sustainability

- Increased diversity and strong staff balance in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and language, particularly in urban/metropolitan areas;
- Use of “stay interviews” for staff to reduce turnover and support longevity; and
- Promotion of work–life balance for staff further supporting longevity (e.g., through free gym memberships).

Safe and stable housing

- Partnerships with Section 8 housing allowing youth to transition to low cost stable housing once they complete their time in a TLP; and
- Friendship-kinship model for host homes, allowing youth to be in a familiar place with people already in their life.

Intake and case management

- Youth have access to all of case managers versus just the one originally assigned;
- Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool utilized to gauge history of housing and homelessness, risks, socialization, daily functions, and wellness; and
- Youth Services Network app provides real-time access to needed services.

Community partnerships

- Partnering with educational services that lead directly to certifications and employment;
- Collaborative street outreach allowing for greater scope in outreach efforts and improved access to services;
- Partnership with local police to develop and implement a bike outreach program; and
- RHY participation in a locally funded program to socialize homeless dogs.

Data available from the PMDMS during the FY 2016 and FY 2017 reporting period (Table 5, below) presented more fine-grained data on the scope and results of FYSB’s onsite review activities. For example, the number of grantees with compliance issues indicates the relatively small percentage of grantees that had significant operational or procedural difficulties as a result of not meeting legislative or programmatic requirements. In addition, the number of grantees successfully completing CAPs points to their ability to resolve any deficiencies that do emerge within a reasonable time. The data suggest the overall performance success and swift remediation of issues among RHY discretionary grantees.

Table 5. Summary of Onsite Reviews

	FY 2016	FY 2017
ONSITE REVIEWS CONDUCTED		
BCP Reviews	72	48
TLP Reviews	52	33
SOP Reviews	25	11
Total Reviews	149	92
REVIEW OUTCOMES		
Reviews with compliance issues identified	7	4
Reviews with corrective action plans required	7	3
Grantees completing all actions proposed in corrective action plan	7	3
Reviews requiring fiscal follow-ups	1	0
Reviews requiring nonfiscal follow-ups	2	2
Training and technical assistance provided to grantee	4	0

The number of reviews decreased in FY 2017 (as compared to FY 2016) for multiple reasons. Most notably, FPOs conducted a large number of visits in 2016, reducing the number of grants requiring review the following year in order to assure that all grants are reviewed at least once during a 3-year grant period. In addition, FYSB experienced staffing issues (among FPOs) due to retirements, vacancies, and staff illness that reduced the overall capacity to conduct site reviews.

In summary, the data indicate compliance issues were identified for less than 5 percent of the grant projects reviewed in FY 2016 and FY 2017. Of the 11 grantees with compliance issues during the reporting period, 10 were required to complete CAPs and all 10 completed their CAPs successfully. There was one follow-up required for fiscal issues, and four follow-ups were required for non-fiscal issues (less than 3 percent).

The information and data presented in this section point to FYSB's robust performance monitoring of its discretionary grantees. The data also illustrate grantees' overall strong project performance consistent with RHY legislation, the requirements of the relevant FOA they responded to, and commitments they made in their approved grant applications.

FYSB Plans for Continuous Performance-Monitoring Progress

FYSB will ensure continuous improvement regarding its discretionary grantee performance monitoring by conducting the following:

- **Develop and provide trainings for FPOs and PMs to assure consistent use of the OMI:** This will facilitate a more standardized and consistent interpretation and implementation of project performance criteria, as well as more standardized and consistent reviews across all RHY grantees. Separate trainings will be provided for FPOs and PMs, which will acknowledge the differences in their roles, even while using the same tools. Each training will walk through how to access and use the OMI and provide opportunities for FPOs and PMs to ask specific follow-up questions.
- **Develop PDF versions of the OMI for each program type (BCPs, TLPs/MGHs, and SOPs):** These can be completed during the actual onsite visit and then uploaded directly into the PMDMS. This eliminates the need for the FPOs and PMs to rewrite their

extensive notes after each visit. It also substantially reduces the time required to report on each review and for the grantee to take action to resolve any identified concerns.

- **Develop 360° feedback forms and provide training for FPOs and PMs:** FYSB plans to develop forms allowing all site review participants to complete and generate their feedback on the other participants. Currently, only the FPO provides brief feedback on the PM. With the 360° process, FPOs will provide feedback on the PM and grantee; PMs will provide feedback on the FPO and grantee; and the grantee will provide feedback on the FPO and PM. FPOs and PMs will receive training on using the 360° feedback form, and grantees will receive instructions to complete their version. Feedback will be used to identify any needed improvements in the onsite review process and support future training on utilization of the form.
- **Develop policy and procedure manuals, including Monitoring Standard Operating Procedures for FPOs and the Peer Monitor Procedures for PMs:** The manuals are scheduled for completion and distribution by early 2019 and are designed to be the first detailed guides addressing program monitoring within ACF.

FYSB recognizes the fundamental role performance monitoring plays in data-driven and outcome-based accountability. The successes to date, as well as the plans set in place to strengthen performance monitoring, reflect FYSB's responsibility and charge to advance accountability.

SECTION 4: Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability: Research and Program Improvement Investments

FYSB has made investments in several research and program development initiatives to bolster data-driven and outcome-based accountability. These include the SOP Data Collection Study, the TLP Special Populations Demonstration Project, and the Successful Transitions for Adulthood Research Study (STARS).

Street Outreach Program Data Collection Study

The SOP Data Collection Study was the first of its kind, funded by FYSB and conducted by researchers at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The study focused on 873 youth ages 14 to 21 in 11 cities nationwide. Respondents included street youth receiving services from SOP grantees, as well as street youth who were not currently using SOP grantee services.

“The aim of the SOP Data Collection Study was to obtain information on service utilization and needs from a subset of homeless street youth being served by a cohort of SOP grantees funded in FY 2010 (data collection occurred in 2013). The goal was to learn about the needs of street youth from their perspective, to better understand which services youth found helpful or not helpful, and to identify alternative services they felt could be useful to them.”⁸

The 11 grantee sites were Austin, Texas; Boston, Massachusetts; Chicago, Illinois; Minneapolis, Minnesota; New York City, New York; Omaha, Nebraska; Port St. Lucie, Florida; San Diego, California; Seattle, Washington; Tucson, Arizona; and Washington, DC.

SOP Data Collection Study Outcomes

The study focused on the experiences and needs of street youth, rather than the outcomes of specific programming or interventions. However, the key findings have practice and research implications. In terms of practice, study results suggest:

- More emergency shelter programs are needed to meet the existing need;
- More flexibility in maximum stay or age restrictions would allow access for youth who have been turned away;
- A greater level of intensive case management (with small caseloads and open-ended service provision) should be incorporated into street outreach, including expanded screening and assessment and treatment planning, in order to link street youth to the full range of needed and available community services; and
- More intensive substance abuse and mental health interventions and supports (utilizing trauma-informed approaches) are needed in response to higher rates of trauma, abuse, and neglect.

Improvements in protective factors are a critical piece of a strength-based approach, particularly the four core outcome domains of safe and stable housing, positive permanent connections,

⁸ Family and Youth Services Bureau, Street Outreach Program. *Data Collection Study Final Report*. Washington, DC: Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016. Retrieved from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fysb/data_collection_study_final_report_street_outreach_program.pdf

social and emotional well-being, and attachment to education and/or employment discussed throughout this Report to Congress. In acknowledgement of the limited amount of high-quality empirical research carried out with homeless youth to date, and the resulting gaps in knowledge about a significant youth population, the study also identified three main areas that require additional research:

- The causes, scope, and demographics of homelessness;
- The efficacy of interventions; and
- System planning and infrastructure.

Plans for Ongoing Progress

Consistent with the recommendation of the study, FYSB is supporting expanded, targeted assessment with youth contacted through street outreach and the outreach conducted by BCPs. Grantees are expected to build their programming on a foundation of PYD and strength-based approaches that incorporate trauma-informed care with staff trained to address the continuing impact of the trauma that homeless youth are likely to experience. Additionally, FYSB is supporting further research, described in the balance of this section, that will contribute to an evidence-based understanding of the needs of homeless youth and the supports and services proving effective in improving their well-being.

The Transitional Living Program Special Populations Demonstration Project

In 2016, FYSB provided \$5.26 million for a TLP Special Populations Demonstration Project focusing on LGBTQ youth between the ages of 16 and 21 experiencing homelessness and/or young adults between the ages of 18 and 21 who have left foster care and are in need of alternative housing and services.

The demonstration project was initiated in response to research that found that LGBTQ youth are particularly vulnerable during episodes of homelessness because, once homeless, they experience higher rates of physical and sexual assault and higher incidences of unsafe sexual contact than non-LGBTQ homeless youth.⁹

FYSB funded nine providers of transitional living shelter and services to participate in the TLP Special Populations Demonstration Project at the end of FY 2016. Each provider received between \$456,000 and \$625,000 for a 24-month period to implement, enhance, and/or support a framework or model to promote the effective transition of the target population to become self-sufficient adults. Based on an assessment of community needs, providers could choose to serve either or both special populations—LGBTQ youth between the ages of 16 and 21 experiencing homelessness and/or young adults between the ages of 18 and 21 who have left foster care but need alternative housing and services. In addition to the services and supports required of all TLP grantees, demonstration project grantees committed to provide safe, stable shelter appropriate for the target population(s) and to participate in an evaluation of the demonstration project.

⁹ L. Whitbeck, X. Chen, D. Hoyt, K. Tyler, and K. Johnson. "Mental disorder, subsistence strategies, and victimization among gay, lesbian, and bisexual homeless and runaway adolescents." *Journal of Sex Research* 2004: 41, 329–342.

Participating organizations focusing on LGBTQ youth were also required to coordinate services with an LGBTQ-specific/inclusive organization, while those that focused on youth exiting from foster care were required to establish a memorandum of understanding with the appropriate child welfare agency in the project's service area. The memorandum of understanding was required to specify how the RHY grantee and the child welfare agency would assure effective coordination of services for those youth.

TLP Demonstration Project Outcomes

At the end of FY 2017, an evaluation of the demonstration project, conducted by an independent contractor, was underway. The study included analyses of required grantee reporting, onsite reviews, and local assessment results. The evaluation and final report were expected in 2020.

Key issues being examined were:

- The effectiveness of partnerships for improvements/advancements in service delivery to the special populations;
- Innovative practices to engage youth and young adults who might not otherwise seek TLP services and to retain those youth appropriately in those services;
- Whether—or to what extent—supportive services were successfully leveraged through local child welfare agencies and the Children's Bureau's Chafee Foster Care Independence Program; and
- How T&TA provided as part of the onsite review process impacted program development.

TLP Plans for Ongoing Progress

FYSB expects the results of the demonstration project and findings from the evaluation study will inform RHY policy and practice, particularly as it relates to reducing service barriers for, and more effectively engaging with, youth aging out of the foster care system and LGBTQ youth. The demonstration results will also provide the basis for clearer guidance to grantees through information and resource sharing via the Clearinghouse, training as provided by RHYTTAC, and TA provided by RHYTTAC and FYSB FPOs.

The Successful Transitions for Adulthood Research Study (STARS)

Even though the TLP has been in operation for nearly 3 decades by the end of FY 2017, beginning with its authorization by Congress in 1988, very little is known about the long-term outcomes for youth served by TLP grantees. To fill this knowledge gap, and consistent with the intent and mandates of the Act as well as the RHY Final Rule issued in 2016, FYSB funded a study to rigorously measure the impact of TLP participation on homeless youth. Planning and design work for STARS began in 2012, with the first site visits conducted between July and September of 2016, and was conducted by an independent research firm. In this study, outcomes for approximately 1,250 eligible youth served by 13 TLP grantees and their partners in urban, suburban, and rural settings were to be evaluated. The 4-year study was comprised of two components addressing impact and implementation.

The impact component would measure the outcomes for participating youth in relation to key areas within the four core outcome domains discussed earlier in this section. The specific focal points for the study are:

- Housing stability;

- Positive social connections;
- Socioeconomic well-being (e.g., emotional well-being and risk-taking behaviors); and
- Attachment to education or employment.

The implementation component would provide a rich description of the range of TLP models being implemented by grantees. Even with standard legislative and FYSB requirements, TLP operational models vary by grantee in relation to the needs and existing service continuum within a specific community or region. The implementation study asks:

- What services are delivered and how?
- What program features and service delivery approaches influence youth outcomes?
- Which elements of the program seem to be working?

A critical element of STARS is the use of a randomized controlled trial (RCT) study. The RCT design and random assignment of youth to “treatment” and “control” groups may help establish causation and help identify project and service elements that contribute to specific outcomes. The eligible youth are randomly assigned into one of two groups: the “program/treatment group”—approximately two-thirds of the study participants—comprised of youth who receive the full package of services from the TLP grantees and their partners, including long-term shelter service; and the “control group,” made up of youth who do not receive shelter through the grantees, but who are eligible for and may receive other types of services in the community, including all other non-housing TLP services.

The study underwent rigorous review and approval by an institutional review board, and the research team developed a comprehensive set of protocols to ensure privacy, confidentiality, and data security.

Site visits to the participating TLP grantees occurred during FY 2016 and FY 2017. During this initial collection of data, the study was only able to acquire information on approximately 150 youth, well short of the original target owing to two factors: (1) The numbers of transitional-age youth served by the participating programs were smaller than projected; and (2) participating grantees found it difficult to implement the RCT as they were reluctant to deny services to any youth by placing them in the control group. These smaller numbers did not reach statistical significance as a sample and led researchers to treat the initial data collection period as a pilot, with the following activities continuing beyond the timeframe covered in this report:

- Enrollment of youth into the study through September 2018;
- A 5-month assessment of each TLP; and
- Data collection through February 2019.

Domestic Victims of Human Trafficking Demonstration Projects

In 2014, FYSB awarded three cooperative agreements to implement demonstration projects addressing domestic human trafficking among high-risk populations, with three additional demonstration projects awarded in 2015. The final evaluation report on the first cohort of projects was published in August 2017.¹⁰ The intent of the demonstration project was to enhance

¹⁰ Jennifer Hardison Walters, Kathleen Krieger, Marianne Kluckman, Rose Feinberg, Steve Orme, Nakisa Asefnia, Merissa Gremminger, and Deborah Gibbs. *Evaluation of Domestic Victims of Human Trafficking Demonstration Projects: Final Report from the First Cohort of Projects* (OPRE Report 2017-57). Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and

organizational and community capacity to identify domestic victims of human trafficking and deliver comprehensive case management and trauma-informed, culturally relevant services through a system of referrals and the formation of community partnerships.

Domestic human trafficking involves both forced labor and sexual exploitation of minors and adults who are citizens and permanent residents of the United States. While the full extent of human trafficking in the United States is unknown, the best available research makes the case that RHY are among the groups significantly overrepresented among domestic trafficking victims. The trauma victims' experience can be pervasive and long-lasting, and survivors' needs for services and support can be extensive.¹¹

The specific objectives of the first cohort of demonstration cooperative agreements, which began in October 2014 and ended in September 2016, were to:

- Assess and build capacity to better identify and serve domestic victims of severe forms of human trafficking;
- Foster collaborations and partnerships to enhance community response to human trafficking;
- Promote effective, culturally appropriate, trauma-informed services that improve the short- and long-term health, safety, and well-being of victims of severe forms of human trafficking;
- Develop networks to expand access to services; and
- Identify service needs for domestic victims of severe forms of human trafficking and improve access to services and benefits for which they are eligible.

The report on the initial cohort of demonstration projects documents the experiences of the three initiatives in Maricopa and Pima Counties, Arizona; New York City, New York; and Salt Lake City, Utah. Through a joint internal evaluation collaboration, FYSB joined with ACF's Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) to inform ACF's efforts to improve services for domestic trafficking survivors, enhance performance measurement, and guide future evaluation. Key research questions focused on the approaches used to foster partnerships, enhance community response, expand access to services, and provide coordinated case management; survivors' experiences with the program; and the costs of program components. The complex study employed a range of data-gathering methods.

Data were gathered through a combination of in-person and telephone interviews with project directors, case managers, and key partners from each project; case narrative interviews with case managers; a review of project materials and documents; cost questionnaires and interviews; observation of project partnership meetings; and project-reported information on training events, clients served, and services provided. Throughout the evaluation, the evaluation team worked

Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, August 2017. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/report/evaluation-domestic-victims-human-trafficking-demonstration-projects-final-report-first>

¹¹ R. Fong and J. Berger Cardoso. Child human trafficking victims: Challenges for the child welfare system. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 2010: 33(3), 311–316.
Heather J. Clawson, Nicole Dutch, Amy Solomon, and Lisa Goldblatt Grace. *Human Trafficking Into and Within the United States: A Review of the Literature*. Washington, DC: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009.

closely with OPRE, FYSB, and RHYTTAC to ensure coordination and alignment of the programmatic and evaluation processes.¹²

DVHT Demonstration Projects Evaluation and Recommendation

The report presented themes and recommendations in multiple areas, including the following:

Community needs assessment

Projects shared suggestions on how to improve the needs assessments:

- Require the community needs assessment earlier in the program period so that it could better inform project implementation;
- Provide TA for the process; and
- Require a third party to conduct the community needs assessment to ensure a rigorous research component.¹³

Trainings

Across projects, training was described as an important and useful component of the projects. “Specifically, training helped raise awareness about human trafficking, engage partners, and build capacity within local organizations.”¹⁴

Partner organizations

Building and sustaining effective working relationships were seen as critical. According to the report authors:

“Partnering organizations played a key role in all three demonstration projects. In addition to assisting with trainings as previously described, partners’ roles involved providing direct client services and bi-directional referrals, participating in the project’s workgroup, and connecting projects to additional partners.”¹⁵

The roles that partners played across demonstration projects entailed:

- Providing direct comprehensive case management services;
- Engaging in bidirectional referrals (with projects both making and receiving referrals among their partner networks); and
- Participating in a project workgroup to discuss shared goals, provide updates, develop strategies to increase capacity to identify and serve trafficking victims, connect partners to other local agencies, and confer about a variety of local or state-level issues related to domestic human trafficking.¹⁶

Across all projects, 47 percent of clients served were confirmed as having ever been sex trafficked; two of the three programs had 88 percent of clients confirmed as ever having been sex

¹² Walters et al. *Evaluation of Domestic Victims of Human Trafficking Demonstration Projects* (OPRE Report 2017-57). <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/report/evaluation-domestic-victims-human-trafficking-demonstration-projects-final-report-first>

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

trafficked. Fewer clients (12 percent) were confirmed as having been labor trafficked, with percentages ranging from 2 to 29 percent across projects.

- Moreover, among those without specific trafficking histories, as many as 63 percent were reported as being at risk of sex trafficking and 39 percent were at risk of labor trafficking. Staff in each of the three projects indicated that a high percentage of clients reported being threatened with harm, ranging from 50 percent to over 75 percent of the clients served.

Significant barriers to services

Issues cited by the three demonstration sites included housing (the need for affordable, safe, and desirable long-term housing far outweighed the availability); detox and treatment for substance abuse (specific substance abuse services, including detox and residential treatment programs, were often challenging for clients to access because of waiting lists or lack of funding); dental services (few sliding-scale or free dental services were available in demonstration projects' communities); and child care (high-quality and low-cost child care was limited and challenging to access).

The evaluation team also asked project staff and partners to reflect on what they learned through their experiences implementing their demonstration project. Their responses focused on the need to:

- Provide service staff with training and professional development opportunities to specialize in services for domestic trafficking victims;
- Engage survivor perspectives and opinions in project planning and implementation;
- Be aware that clients may be in and out of a trafficking situation;
- Be flexible and prepared to adapt “business as usual” to serve domestic trafficking victims—the type of agency mattered less than an agency’s willingness and ability to adapt services and approaches to meet the unique needs of trafficking survivors;
- Identify existing services in the community and adapt them to fit the needs of domestic trafficking victims;
- Adapt existing housing services for trafficking survivors rather than implementing a new and different residential program model; and
- Look to existing service populations to identify individuals who are domestic victims of human trafficking: staff (or the organization) may not recognize trafficking victimization among their current clients.

DVHT Human Trafficking Demonstration Project Plans for Ongoing Progress

As noted in the description of the demonstration grants, FYSB intends to use the thematic research-based findings and recommendations from the projects to enhance the capacity to identify domestic victims of human trafficking and deliver comprehensive services and referrals. Based on the information in the final report, programs working with those experiencing or at risk of trafficking are in a position to better understand (1) the strengths and challenges with case management; (2) the need for trauma-informed care and culturally relevant services (and the accompanying needs for staff training and partnering with experienced service providers); and (3) the critical value of a system of referrals and the formation of community partnerships.

As with the other research efforts described in the report, FYSB will use the findings to become more data driven and outcome based. FYSB intends to integrate the lessons learned from these demonstration projects into T&TA for its RHY grantees and its work with local, regional, and national partners to meet the needs of RHY. Additional efforts include the following:

- In collaboration with RHYTTAC, RHY Clearinghouse, and NRS, FYSB will develop online training and resources to enhance grantees' capacity to identify and integrate trauma-informed interventions for RHY who may be victims, or at risk, of human trafficking. Training topics will include screening and assessment; trauma-informed models to serve trafficked youth; collaboration efforts to serve youth victims of labor and sex trafficking; and labor trafficking among RHY.
- FYSB will include human trafficking workshops as part of the annual RHY National Training.
- In FY 2017, FYSB partnered with Polaris, U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), and Loyola University's Modern Slavery Research Center to develop training and resources focused on labor trafficking among RHY and hosted listening sessions with RHY grantees to learn about grantees' training needs on human trafficking; discuss the integration of survivors into youth programming; and share promising practices on services for trafficked youth from underserved populations. The information gathered from these listening sessions was utilized to develop informational resources addressing human trafficking and its intersection with RHY. Some of these resources include topics such as social media and human trafficking recruitment, human trafficking laws impacting RHY, and how RHY programs can use the National Human Trafficking Hotline.
- In FY 2017, FYSB contracted with substance matter experts to develop e-learning modules addressing sex and labor trafficking prevention in RHY settings. At the end of FY 2017, the final products are scheduled to be released in 2018.
- Since 2016, FYSB has been integrating specific human trafficking language into RHY FOAs to assist in the identification of RHY at risk of trafficking or those who are trafficking victims.
- FYSB and Polaris developed a training for the National Runaway Safeline staff to build their capacity to identify youth who are calling the NRS and may be youth victims of sex or labor trafficking.
- In collaboration with the National Runaway Safeline, the RHY Program will launch a series of online trainings and educational materials to address runaway prevention and discuss the intersection of running away, youth homelessness, and human trafficking.

SECTION 5: Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability: Service Provision Data For FYSB-Funded National Entities Supporting RHY Grantees and RHY

FYSB funds several national entities to support the work of RHY grantees and RHY. These include the RHYTTAC and the National Communication System. Specifications on the range, topics, frequency, and duration of supportive services provided and future plans are detailed in this section of the report. A description of the National Clearinghouse on Homeless Youth and Families focus and scope of work is also provided.

Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center

RHYTTAC is funded by FYSB to provide T&TA to RHY Program grantees under all RHY programs. RHYTTAC's primary purposes are to:

- Engage public and private systems and institutions to assist in the development of systemic improvements and responses to RHY, including integration with CoCs, and in the development of unified coordinated entry protocols;
- Develop and contribute to the body of knowledge on RHY prevention and intervention and support evidence-based practices and strategies for intervention and prevention; and
- Broaden public awareness of RHY through the development and distribution of information and resources to grantees, service providers, and the public, including those related to intervention/prevention strategies, prevalence statistics, emerging issues, culturally specific populations, and special topics.

These primary purposes are fulfilled through various services and activities. Table 6 displays the breadth of contact that RHYTTAC had with RHY grantees for each FYSB funding stream.

Table 6. Breadth of RHYTTAC Contact with Grantee across RHY Funding Streams

Grantees Served by RHYTTAC	FY 2016	FY 2017
Basic Center Program grantees	291	282
Transitional Living Program grantees (includes Maternity Group Homes)	209	233
Street Outreach Program grantees	96	93
Total	596	608

Notes. FY = fiscal year; RHY = runaway and homeless youth; RHYTTAC = Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center.

RHYTTAC delivers a comprehensive array of local, regional, national, and on-demand T&TA. RHYTTAC's T&TA delivery system is designed to address grantee needs and help ensure their ability to meet federal standards and guidelines as well as those set forth in the RHY Final Rule (December 2016). T&TA activities also address emerging issues related to RHY and expand the capacity of RHY grantees and allied professionals to:

- Provide evidence-informed youth intervention and prevention services;

- Offer culturally relevant, linguistically appropriate, and accessible services to youth from diverse communities;
- Provide trauma-informed services and trauma-focused intervention strategies that address exposure to violence;
- Employ PYD practices that promote the social and emotional well-being of children, youth, and families;
- Provide intervention and prevention services to those who are experiencing or who are at risk of experiencing human trafficking; and
- Disseminate information and develop resources in collaboration with FYSB to address human trafficking prevention and intervention in RHY settings.

Table 7 shows training events and numbers of participants during the reporting period.

Table 7. Breadth of Participation in Major RHYTTAC Training Events

Training Events	Participants FY 2016	Participants FY 2017
SITE-BASED EVENTS (in-person attendance)		
Skill-Based Training	335	358
Transitional Living Program Grantee Training	151	n/a
Street Outreach Program Grantee Training	106	n/a
Runaway and Homeless Youth Grantee National Training	711	658
WEB-BASED AND OTHER REMOTE EVENTS		
Skill-Based Training (live webinars)	1,813	1,099
Facilitated Training and Networking Group Conference Calls	502	625
On-Demand Training (archived webinars)	9,930	10,726

Notes. FY = fiscal year; RHYTTAC = Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center.

In FY 2016 and FY 2017, training was provided in such areas as human trafficking, harm reduction, crisis de-escalation, and motivational interviewing. Specific courses included *Trauma-Informed Care Training of Trainers*; *Trauma-Informed Care: Application to Practice*; *Youth Thrive*; and *Child and Youth Care (CYC) Foundations*.

Child and Youth Care (CYC) Foundations is a 32-hour course consisting of two online modules and 6 days of in-person training. Course participants can take an exam to be nationally certified as a child and youth care worker at the entry or associate level, or internationally certified at the professional level. During FY 2016 and FY 2017, 50 participants took the certification test, with all but one passing.

RHYTTAC-Initiated FYSB Grantee Training

RHYTTAC convened the FY 2016 and FY 2017 national training for all RHY Program grantees. The FY 2016 event, held in New Orleans, Louisiana, was attended by 711 participants representing 49 states and Washington, DC, and featured 64 learning sessions addressing program performance and priorities for programs receiving federal funding. The FY 2017 national training event in Kansas City, Missouri, attracted 658 attendees who participated in 59 learning sessions. Of attendees providing conference evaluations, an average of 95 percent for both years reported they would recommend the event to a colleague.

FYSB Grantee Training by Program Type

In September of FY 2016, RHYTTAC, in collaboration with FYSB federal staff, coordinated a 2-day TLP/MGH grantee training for 151 participants and a 2-day SOP grantee training for 106 participants, both of which were held in Baltimore, Maryland. TLP/MGH grantee training sessions included the following:

- Understanding the Impact of Trauma on Well-Being
- Aftercare that Promotes Attainable Self-Sufficiency
- Planning for Outcomes
- Building Relationships—Relationship Violence Prevention Among RHY
- Meeting Mental Health and Addiction-Specific Needs through Motivational Interviewing
- Healthy Families: Ensuring the Well-Being of Homeless Youth and Their Children

SOP sessions included the following:

- Strategies for Well-Being
- Peer-to-Peer Exchange (on the challenges and strategies for SOPs)
- Interpersonal Violence and Gang-Involved Youth
- Knowing Our Youth: Collecting, Uploading, and Analyzing SOP Data in HMIS

Both included a session focused on human trafficking: Human Trafficking and Collaboration Strategies for the TLP grantees, and The Intersection of Human Trafficking and Street Outreach Programs for the SOP grantees.

Ninety-seven percent of attendees at the TLP training and 99 percent of those at the SOP training said the information and resources provided were relevant to their work. Ninety-nine percent of TLP attendees and 96 percent of SOP attendees said the information could be integrated into their current programs and work.

Technical Assistance Clinics and Institutes

In FY 2016 and FY 2017, RHYTTAC continued to utilize a “pick-up” model to provide on-demand grantee training that specifically addressed local challenges. Grantees explained their needs, and RHYTTAC staff responded with information or a local training. With direct applicability to grantee concerns and a rapid response to their immediate requirements, the pick-up model ensured that training focused on grantees’ most pressing needs. In FY 2016 and FY 2017, RHYTTAC conducted 16 pick-up events in various locations throughout the United States. Training topics included youth resiliency, child and youth care foundations, motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, harm reduction, and human trafficking.

Webinars

RHYTTAC planned and delivered 32 facilitated webinars (also archived for future viewing) as well as an additional eight webinars developed specifically for on-demand use during FY 2016 and FY 2017. Some of the webinar training topics were:

- The Affordable Care Act;
- New grantee orientation;
- The U.S. Department of Energy’s partnership with FYSB;

- Mentoring programs;
- Brain-based youth programming;
- Workforce development;
- Developing an effective board of directors;
- Meeting the legal needs of youth;
- Trauma and resilience in youth and staff;
- Neurobiology and the adolescent brain and addiction; and
- Psychiatric perspectives on the mental health needs of RHY.

In addition, RHYTTAC presented two six-part webinar series: one on developing a positive culture and climate in RHY-serving organizations, and another on effective supervisory practice. There were 1,813 participants in facilitated webinars in FY 2016 and 1,099 participants in FY 2017. In addition, there were 9,930 on-demand participants in FY 2016, increasing to 10,726 participants in FY 2017. All webinars, whether presented live or recorded, were archived for future viewing by grantees.

Web-Based (Self-Directed) Learning

RHYTTAC offered on-demand courses in the form of e-learning modules and recorded webinars. Training was designed and delivered by professionals for each of the topics required by FOA and RHY legislation. The training varied by program type and the year of the FOA. Some of the most frequently utilized archived webinars were on:

- PYD;
- Domestic violence and RHY;
- Harm reduction;
- HIV/AIDS;
- Adolescent suicide;
- Bullying and harassment;
- Crisis intervention;
- Child sex trafficking;
- Drug and alcohol use;
- Aftercare;
- Substance abuse;
- Sexual health and preventing teen pregnancy; and
- Cultural competency.

Utilization of on-demand web-based learning during the reporting period is provided in Table 8.

Table 8. Data Summary of RHYTTAC Web-Based Events

Web-Based Learning Use	FY 2016	FY 2017
Number of courses offered	259	302
Number of subscribers	2,100	2,300
Number of webinars viewed	9,930	10,726
Average webinars viewed per subscriber	5	5

Grantee-Initiated Technical Assistance

RHYTTAC provides TA to address questions from grantees as well as in response to FYSB-identified areas of need. Grantees can communicate directly with RHYTTAC via email, website, or a toll-free number. In FY 2016 and FY 2017, RHYTTAC received and responded to 4,658 requests or questions from grantees. There were 694 additional requests for TA made by FYSB. Finally, as a proactive measure, RHYTTAC initiated 1,519 TA information- and resource-sharing activities as well as the grantee trainings described previously to address grantee-identified needs, where no direct request was made by a grantee.

Targeted, Intensive Technical Assistance

RHYTTAC provided targeted, intensive TA to 26 grantees during this period. Assistance is always individualized to the grantee and its particular needs, is provided either by expert RHYTTAC staff experienced in the RHY field or by substance matter experts, and is augmented by referrals to appropriate information and additional training resources that address the wide range of adult learning styles while incorporating principles and practices of transformational learning.

RHYTTAC works with grantees to address needs identified during onsite peer monitoring visits or as a result of findings of noncompliance. TA at grantee sites is limited, unless absolutely necessary, but was provided to one grantee in FY 2016.

RHYTTAC provided other grantees with targeted TA that was delivered via email, conference calls, and online meetings. Comprehensive assessments and regular follow-up ensure that individual grantees implement continuous improvement and take advantage of opportunities for capacity-building. Monitoring reports, data from the RHY-HMIS, corrective action reports, and other program-specific materials are used to design the targeted TA response for each grantee.

Support for Emerging and Promising Practices, Outcomes, and Sharing of Information

In addition to its primary focus on T&TA, RHYTTAC supports service innovation, identifying evidence-based practices on prevention and intervention while assisting with the dissemination, promotion, adoption, and adaptation of such practices in the RHY field. This includes developing and enhancing RHY intervention and prevention strategies by fostering the development and adaptation of promising practices throughout the field and by creating or gathering guidelines, materials, and policies. RHYTTAC also enhances workforce development options for RHY-serving organizations and encourages knowledge of public welfare policies to increase access to benefits for RHY.

Information Services

In FY 2016 and FY 2017, RHYTTAC sent out over 240 e-blast messages to grantees to disseminate information. There were 67,163 visits to the RHYTTAC website, 957 Facebook subscribers, and 522 Twitter followers. RHYTTAC also operates and supports a private web-based discussion room called Communities of Practice (CoP), where 600 grantee participants network and share information. More than 16,000 communications were logged on the CoP discussion room during this reporting period.

RHYTTAC also makes peer-to-peer links between experienced and less experienced grantees, enabling grantees to share their expertise and learn from successful programs through support, guidance, and materials such as policy and procedures manuals, resident handbooks, case file packets (examples or templates), and outreach materials.

Culture of Care Project

RHYTTAC contracted with the Children's Mental Health Services Research Center (CMHSRC) to utilize strategies to improve operational effectiveness and capacity to implement new methods within BCPs, drawing on the CMHSRC's expertise. Through the 9-month project conducted in 2015, CMHSRC worked with a small group of eight BCP grantees to pilot Cultures of Care, an organizational change strategy developed for RHY programs. Based on CMHSRC's Availability, Responsiveness, Continuity model, Cultures of Care is the only organizational change strategy that has been found to be effective (through multiple RCTs) in improving organizational and client outcomes in child welfare and mental health agencies. Basic Center grantees in the pilot experienced improvement in their culture and climate scores, staff became more engaged with their clients, internal communications improved, teams were more cohesive, and there was an increased focus on client well-being.

Transitional Living Program Special Population—Demonstration Project

The RHYTTAC provided general and targeted TA to nine FYSB-funded cooperative agreements for the 24-month TLP demonstration project to implement, enhance, and/or support a framework or model that incorporates promising strategies for the effective transition of homeless youth and/or young adults to self-sufficiency. The target populations are LGBTQ RHY (ages 16 to 21) and young adults who have been emancipated from foster care.

Enhancing Sustainability Project

In partnership with a cohort of RHY grantees representing all 10 federal regions, RHYTTAC developed an assessment for grantees to consider sustainability specific to RHY programs, assessing multiple domains (e.g., program evaluation). The grantee cohort utilized the assessment to set goals, plan, and implement capacity-building activities and to measure progress. Based on feedback from pilot participants, RHYTTAC proceeded to develop tools, resources, and a facilitation model to support grantees in enhancing their sustainability. Three on-demand webinars on sustainability are available for RHY grantees.

National Runaway Safeline

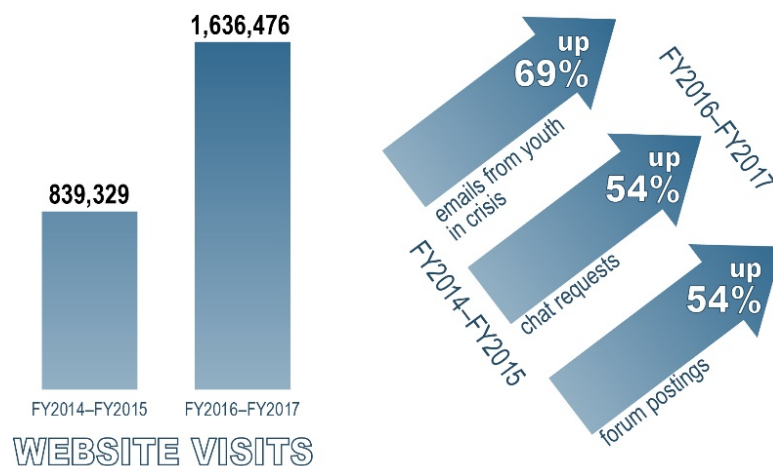
The NCS is currently operated by the NRS. The NRS connects, at no cost, RHY with their families, shelters, counseling, medical assistance, and other vital services when necessary. The NRS also provides crisis intervention and prevention resources to vulnerable youth at risk of running away and/or becoming homeless.

The mission of the NRS is to keep America’s runaway, homeless, and at-risk youth safe and off the streets. During the reporting period, NRS operations were supported by a 5-year FYSB grant awarded in 2012. In 2017, the NRS was selected, through a competitive process, to continue operating the NCS under a 3-year cooperative agreement.

Utilization and Service Data

Following the launch of the new website, which was reinforced by social media, NRS saw the number of website visits nearly double during the 2 FYs that followed (Figure 5). Website visits increased from 839,329 during FY 2014 and FY 2015 combined to 1,636,476 in FY 2016 and FY 2017 combined. This rise in website visitors was accompanied by a significant increase in the number of online requests for services, including an increased receipt of emails from youth in crisis (growing by 69 percent) and forum postings (growing by 54 percent). Chat requests also increased 54 percent during the 2-year period of this report compared to those during FY 2014 and FY 2015.

Figure 5. National Runaway Safeline Website Activity, FY 2014–FY 2017



The activities performed by NRS include:

- Answering hotline calls;
- Responding to text messages;
- Responding to inquiries received via chat;
- Answering emails;
- Referring youth, families, and other concerned parties to resources, including other national hotlines such as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children® (NCMEC), the National Human Trafficking Hotline, and the National Domestic Violence Hotline;
- Facilitating conference calls between a youth and an agency or organization that can help;
- Relaying messages between youth and their parents, families, or guardians when parties are not ready to communicate directly;

- Facilitating and providing support for and during conference calls between youth and their parents, families, or guardians;
- Maintaining a website that describes NRS services, provides means of contacting NRS, and shares information resources;
- Maintaining, monitoring, and responding to an online forum with multiple topic threads;
- Operating and facilitating the Home Free program, a program to reunite RHY with their parents, guardians, family members, or other safe living arrangements through free bus tickets provided by Greyhound Lines, Inc.; and
- National outreach, prevention, and community education efforts.

While NRS answers hotline calls and emails and responds to text messages and inquiries received via chat, a crisis log is completed only when a youth, or adult on behalf of a youth, contacts NRS and receives crisis intervention services. Thus, not all contacts result in a crisis log. In FY 2016, there were 69,687 contacts to NRS, with a crisis log completed for nearly half (33,012). In FY 2017, the number of contacts was 61,433 (with 30,051 crisis logs). Since multiple problems may be identified during a crisis contact, multiple options may be discussed, and multiple referrals may be made, the numbers of problems and options typically exceed the number of contacts. Tables 9 and 10 provide details on crisis logs during the reporting period. Table 11 provides details on crisis communications received digitally.

In addition, the numbers in Tables 9 through 18 do not correspond to those listed in the Crisis Contact Report released in 2017, as the figures in that report represent NRS FYs, which are not the same as the federal FY (October 1 to September 30) utilized throughout this report.

Table 9. National Runaway Safeline Crisis Log Source and Referral Data Summary

Crisis Log Sources and Referrals	FY 2016	FY 2017
Youth (regarding self)	20,898	19,307
Youth (regarding another youth)	8,328	7,369
Adult (regarding a youth)	3,786	3,372

Table 10. National Runaway Safeline Crisis Log Detail Data Summary

Crisis Log Details	FY 2016	FY 2017
Problems identified	92,323	61,438
Options discussed	104,251	69,283
Total youth crisis contacts with referrals offered	18,557	11,857
Total referrals made	21,930	20,146
Message relays offered	242	143
Message relays accepted	70	60
Conference calls with parent/guardian offered (includes Home Free program)	1,354	1,592
Completed conference with parent/guardian (includes Home Free program, detailed separately in table)	122	141
Conference call with youth and referral resource(s)	2,287	2,166
Conference call with parent and referral resource(s)	151	146
Transfer to NCMEC offered	160	121

Crisis Log Details	FY 2016	FY 2017
Transfer to NCMEC completed	45	26
Total Crisis Logs	33,012	30,051

Note. NCMEC = National Center for Missing or Exploited Children.

Data sets in this table represent activity and topics in contacts with National Runaway Safeline, and thus a single contact may result in multiple problems identified and one or more referrals made.

Table 11. National Runaway Safeline Digital Crisis Log Data Summary

Digital Crisis Services (Email, Forum, and Chat)	FY 2016	FY 2017
Crisis emails	6,056	5,209
Forum posts	3,494	3,192
Crisis texts	975	2,206
Total chat services requests	14,924	11,727
Youth chat logs	4,725	3,643

NRS works in partnership with Greyhound Lines, Inc., to administer the Home Free program, which reunites RHY ages 12 to 21 with their families by giving them free bus tickets home. When returning home to family members is not an option, RHY ages 18 to 21 may receive free tickets to alternative living arrangements, such as the homes of extended family members or TLPs near their homes. Table 12 provides Home Free program details for the reporting period.

Table 12. National Runaway Safeline Home Free Program Data Summary

Home Free Program	FY 2016	FY 2017
Program inquires	1,112	1,254
Home Free process completed and tickets issued (includes parents)	336	328
Out-of-state tickets issued (includes parents)	308	309
Parent tickets issued	2	9

NRS collects the demographics and current status of contacts resulting in crisis logs. Information about gender and race for contacts that occurred during the reporting period are provided in Tables 13 and 14.

Table 13. National Runaway Safeline Contacts by Gender Data Summary

Gender of Person Making Contact	FY 2016 Percentage	FY 2017 Percentage
Female	71	68
Male	27	29

Table 14. National Runaway Safeline Contacts by Ethnicity Data Summary

Race of Person Making Contact FY 2017	FY 2015–2016 Percentage	FY 2016–2017 Percentage
White/Caucasian	46	41
Black or African American	18	19
Hispanic or Latino	16	16

Race of Person Making Contact FY 2017	FY 2015–2016 Percentage	FY 2016–2017 Percentage
Not provided/declined to answer	9	11
Multiracial	6	8
Asian	3	3
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	1
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	1

NRS also collects data about the ages of youth making contact and their history of running away. This data shows that:

- Seventeen percent of youth contacts in FY 2016 had a history of running away and 16 percent of youth contacts in FY 2017 had previously run away;
- Forty percent of youth contacts in FY 2016 were age 16 to 17 compared to 49 percent in FY 2017; and
- Seven percent of youth were age 13 or younger in FY 2016, while 8 percent were age 13 or younger in FY 2017.

The status descriptions used to identify the youth who contacted the NRS are defined as follows and apply to Table 15:

- “Youth in Crisis” are youth in a serious situation unrelated to being a youth living on the street. For example, a youth at risk of human trafficking may call for support, regardless of their current housing situation.
- “Contemplating Running Away” describes those youth who mention thinking about running away from home.
- “Runaway” applies to youth up to age 18 who left home without permission.
- “Homeless” are youth ages 18 to 21 on the street whose family is homeless.
- “Suspected Missing” indicates that a youth’s location is unknown because they have not communicated it to their parent or guardian; the parent or guardian suspects that they are missing.

Furthermore, NRS documents the status of youth at the time of contact (Table 15). Between FY 2016 and FY 2017, the percentage of youth in crisis increased slightly (2 percent) over the previous year. In the same period, the percentage of youth on the street decreased by 6 percent, while those contemplating running away rose by 5 percent, indicating more youth reached out to NRS for prevention rather than waiting for a needed intervention.

Table 15. Youth Status at Point of National Runaway Safeline Contact Data Summary

Youth Status at Time of Contact	FY 2016 Percentage	FY 2017 Percentage
Youth in crisis	36	38
Contemplating running away	35	40
Total youth on the street	28	22
Runaway	16	9
Homeless	8	9
Asked or forced to leave home	4	4
Suspected missing	1	1

NRS also documents the presenting issues discussed during the contact. These issues are recorded by staff at the time of contact and are broken into NRS-defined categories. Family dynamics dominated the presenting issues, exceeding a third of contacts for both FYs. As shown in Table 16, approximately 10 percent of contacts identified peer/social issues, emotional/verbal abuse, and mental health issues as key concerns each year.

Table 16. National Runaway Safeline Data Summary of Issues at point of Contact

Issues Identified by Contacts	FY 2016 Percentage	FY 2017 Percentage
Family dynamics	35	43
Peer/social issues	11	8
Emotional/verbal abuse	9	8
Mental health	9	8
Physical abuse/assault	7	6
Economics	5	6
School/education	5	3
Neglect	3	3
Transportation	3	4
Youth/family services	3	2
Alcohol/drug abuse	3	2
Judicial system	2	1
Health	2	2
LGBTQ	1	2
Sexual abuse/assault	1	1
Exploitation/trafficking	1	1

The presenting issues discussed between a youth and an NRS staff member lead to staff working with the youth to identify referral options for services in the categories provided in Table 17.

Table 17. National Runaway Safeline Data Summary of Options Discussed at Point of Contact

Options Discussed with Contacts	FY 2016 Percentage	FY 2017 Percentage
National Runaway Safeline services	26	27
Family member (get help from/stay with family member)	10	12
Police	10	9
Friend	9	10
Alternative youth housing (e.g., community programs other than Transitional Living Program)	7	7
Adult (other than family member, parent/guardian, or school personnel)	7	5
Legal services	5	4
Social services	5	3
Child abuse reporting	4	5
School personnel	3	4
Self-help or support hotlines	3	3
Home Free program	2	2
Mental health professional	3	2
Independent/Transitional Living Program	2	3
Social worker/case worker	1	1
Juvenile court services	1	<1
Health professional	1	1
United Way	<1	1
Missing children numbers	1	<1
Faith/religious organization	1	1

Even with referrals often made, the limited resources available for RHY in many communities means significant needs may go unmet. As can be seen in Table 18, the predominant unmet need is for shelter. This is consistent with the reality that the number of beds for RHY in a typical community is far exceeded by the number of youths without safe and stable housing on a given night. Physical and mental health care were also reported as unmet needs by multiple youth.

Table 18. National Runaway Safeline Unmet Needs Data Summary

Unmet Needs	FY 2016 Percentage	FY 2017 Percentage
Shelter	85	90
Health care	6	6
Outpatient mental health services	4	1
Inpatient drug/alcohol treatment	2	1
Inpatient mental health services	2	1
Outpatient drug/alcohol treatment	1	1

NRS also undertakes outreach, prevention, and community education activities as part of serving as the federally funded RHY NCS. During the reporting period, these included disseminating public service announcements (PSAs); promoting and supporting the implementation of the

revised *Let's Talk* curriculum; leading the annual National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM) campaign each November; and increasing outreach efforts by making presentations and delivering workshops at conferences.

Public Service Announcements

In FY 2016, NRS promoted and disseminated an FYSB-produced runaway prevention PSA to media outlets. The “Runaway, Homeless and At-Risk Youth Crisis Hotline - 1-800-RUNAWAY PSA” was shown in 61 markets on 165 television stations, for a total of 24,403 airings.¹⁷ In addition, PSAs were distributed via public transportation, including buses and bus stop shelters.



An example of the 1-800-RUNAWAY PSA at a bus stop shelter

Let's Talk Curriculum

Immediately prior to the reporting period, NRS revised its *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum*, enhancing some sections in response to the expressed needs of teachers, social service providers, and community members. *Let's Talk* is an interactive, 14-module runaway prevention curriculum designed for youth ages 12 to 20. The curriculum, which may be downloaded from the NRS website or ordered on CD-ROM, can be used in a variety of settings, including schools, youth groups, community centers, and after-school clubs. Dissemination data for *Let's Talk* is provided in Table 19.

Table 19. Data Summary for Let's Talk Curriculum

<i>Let's Talk</i> Curriculum Dissemination	FY 2016	FY 2017
Copies distributed	214	171
Page visits to <i>Let's Talk</i> curriculum webpage	3,790	4,297

¹⁷ National Runaway Safeline. *Runaway, Homeless and At-Risk Youth Crisis Hotline - 1-800-RUNAWAY PSA (:60)*. April 15, 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFBhFvhQ7so>

In addition to the curriculum itself, NRS offers support and TA to anyone interested in implementing this resource. It also collected some information related to the impact of the curriculum as part of its ongoing quality improvement and evidence-based efforts.

The original curriculum is available in English and Spanish and the revised curriculum is available in English. Both are free of charge to schools, RHY grantees, youth-serving organizations, child welfare agencies, and community organizations.

National Runaway Prevention Month

November is NRPM. Every year, NRS leads the NRPM efforts with the support of FYSB. NRPM is a social media campaign designed to raise awareness of the RHY crisis, including the issues that young people face that cause them to run away or become homeless, and it educates the public about solutions and the role they can play in addressing youth homelessness. It is also an opportunity to spotlight the resources available to support youth in crisis throughout the nation. As part of the NRPM campaign, individuals, organizations, and communities are encouraged to work together to prevent runaway incidents and youth homelessness. Originally called National Runaway Prevention Week, then-President George W. Bush hosted a conference at the White House that focused on the needs of runaway and exploited children, the first summit of its kind. Leaders, youth, and key stakeholders from around the country gathered to discuss the issues around runaway youth, and the week was expanded to a month-long observance.

NRS promotes NRPM awareness through social media platforms (i.e., Instagram and Facebook) and the dissemination of useful resources, such as its toolkit to engage communities and RHY grantees. The NRPM activities also include Wear Green Day and an annual candlelight vigil.

National Clearinghouse on Homeless Youth and Families (NCHYF)

The NCHYF is funded by FYSB to serve as a primary source of informational assistance for youth-serving organizations related to the development and implementation of prevention and intervention services for RHY and their families. The NCHYF also serves the general public interested in learning about the RHY field, including intersecting issues with FYSB's other program areas, Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention and Family Violence Prevention and Services.

The NCHYF maintains the RHY and FYSB websites. It provides an array of extensive resources to current and prospective RHY grantees, youth-serving organizations, youth who have run away from home or are experiencing homelessness, and youth at risk of running away from home or becoming homeless and their families. The NCHYF produces materials, publications, newsletters, online learning courses, and multimedia tools. It also produces agreed-upon electronic communications products such as presentations, fact sheets, videos, posters, and brochures that integrate key messages and promote strategies related to and overlapping with the RHY Program. Topical coverage includes, but is not limited to, safe and stable housing; education; employment; permanent connections; social, emotional, and physical well-being; underserved populations; youth and young adults at risk of or who have experienced human trafficking; and the intersection with similarly related federal programs, including those funded by FYSB and ACF.

SECTION 6: Conclusions

This final section of the Report to Congress for FY 2016 and FY 2017 includes (1) a summary of progress and findings related to FYSB's increased attention to data-driven and outcome-based approaches to accountability, highlighting key details and data points from the section devoted to the topic; and (2) a set of future actions relevant to each section topic and intended to inform and guide FYSB's ongoing work.

Addressing the Needs of RHY

Summary

To acquire a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the challenges and issues confronting RHY, FYSB has taken the following actions to identify the scope and depth of runaway and homeless issues, the current needs of the RHY population, and the types of services programs can provide to best meet those needs:

- FYSB developed and issued the RHY Final Rule (December 2016), which is built upon existing policies and guidance to better support RHY by strengthening training and professional development for service providers, defining safe and appropriate exits from homelessness, and requiring aftercare planning for all youth exiting programs.
- FYSB is implementing multiple actions to address the historical undercounting of RHY and the risks they experience. These actions include developing a more accurate picture of the RHY population and compiling relevant research, including RHY-HMIS data and Voices of Youth Count findings, which was scheduled for release in late 2018.
- FYSB is clarifying and specifying the needs of RHY subgroups (e.g., rural homeless youth) through research investments, including the Support Systems for Rural Homeless Youth Demonstration Projects carried out between 2008 and 2015, the 5-year TLP Outcome Study begun in 2014, and the Domestic Victims of Human Trafficking Demonstration Projects implemented from 2014 to 2018.
- FYSB requires grantees to provide trauma-informed care, including screening and assessments designed to more readily identify youth victimized by or at risk of labor and sex trafficking, to better assure the identification of trafficking victims and their safety and well-being.
- FYSB continues to assure low-barrier services to youth outside of traditional systems, such as juvenile justice and child welfare, through SOP grantees meeting youth where they live, BCP grantees providing short-term shelter and support services, and TLP grantees providing longer-term housing and support for the transition into independent living.
- FYSB's ongoing anti-trafficking efforts seek to build the capacity of RHY programs to prevent, identify, and assist trafficked RHY. FYSB's efforts will continue focusing on internal and external collaboration and capacity building to ensure a comprehensive response to this vulnerable population.

Future Activity

The following actions may help to develop a more accurate, reliable picture of the needs of RHY. This includes identifying the needs of subpopulations and the greatest risks posed to each group as well as to all youth without stable, secure, and safe housing, through:

- Gathering needs and demographic data through the TLP Evaluation Study;
- Utilizing recommendations from the DVHT final report and additional resources to develop tools and promote activities to better understand the impact of human trafficking in RHY settings and effectively learn about the TA needs of RHY grantees;
- Collaborating further with support for national partners in the field;
- Continuing to strengthen the effective submission and quality of RHY-HMIS data by concentrating on improving completion rates and reliability of grantee data reporting to support expanded analysis by FYSB of youth demographics and needs and grantee services; and
- Reviewing the relationship of the MGH awards process to all TLPs and examining potential benefits of a separate FOA focusing on MGH alone.

Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability: RHY-HMIS Progress

Summary

To more fully incorporate accountability into its discretionary funding streams, FYSB is implementing an initiative to identify a unifying set of outcomes across funding streams; require proposals to demonstrate an understanding of and explain plans for measuring those outcomes; and gradually build the knowledge base being generated by RHY discretionary grantees. This multiyear initiative and organizational development process will continue to evolve in a reasonable and appropriate manner.

- FYSB developed four core outcome domains for youth experiencing homelessness as part of the RHY Final Rule issued in December of 2016, building these outcomes into the metrics for mandatory performance standards specific to each program type (SOP, BCP, and TLP) derived from the federal RHY legislation.
- In addition, all potential RHY grantees must develop logic models addressing the core outcome domains as part of their grant applications and report on those outcomes throughout the duration of the grant.
- The RHY-HMIS is at the center of a data-driven and outcome-based approach to demonstrate FYSB's impact on RHY. Integrated within the HUD HMIS, the RHY-HMIS tracks service numbers, demographics, and characteristics of all youth served by RHY grantees, as well as key outcomes.
- Highlights of data gathered to date by BCPs:
 - In FY 2016, there were 28,396 youth receiving services, which rose to 29,106 youth in FY 2017;
 - Over half of the youth served each year were female;
 - Over half of those served each year were minority youth; and
 - Over half of those served each year were under the age of 16.

- Highlights of data gathered by TLPs:
 - In FY 2016, there were 4,687 youth receiving services, which rose to 5,135 youth in FY 2017;
 - Over half of the youth served each year were female;
 - Just under half of the youth served each year were minorities; and
 - Nearly three-quarters of the youth served each year were under 21.
- Highlights of data gathered by SOPs:
 - In FY 2016, there were 31,475 youth served, which reduced to 30,589 served in FY 2017;
 - Nearly one-third of the youth served each year were female; and
 - Over one-third of those served were minority youth.

Future Activity

- Incorporate the four core outcome domains for youth experiencing homelessness into the existing multiple opportunities for grantees to better define the objectives and outcomes of each RHY-funded project (in BCP, TLP/MGH, and SOP), including required logic models/theories of change and federal performance standards.
- Strengthen RHY-HMIS outcome data through further analysis of baseline data (FY 2016 and FY 2017), providing TA through FYSB staff and RHYTTAC for projects at group and individual levels that targets any fidelity and validity concerns identified in prior uploads of data. Improve data reliability and validity to better understand current RHY Program impacts and enhance those outcomes.
- Examine the functionality of the RHY-HMIS within the larger HUD HMIS and identify how RHY-HMIS reporting structures might be enhanced (also supporting increased data reliability and validity).

Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability Approaches: Program Performance-Monitoring Progress

Summary

The reauthorization of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act in 2008 placed greater emphasis on outcomes for RHY discretionary grant recipients. FYSB employs multiple review and oversight strategies to monitor RHY discretionary grantee performance. As part of FYSB's ongoing efforts to ensure a more data-driven and outcome-based approach, and in light of the limited valid and reliable data on RHY discussed in Section 1, the program monitoring process was enhanced and expanded in a number of ways:

- Three RPMs were hired in August and October of 2016 to provide a higher level of supervision and management of the FPOs across the 10 federal regions. FYSB developed revised monthly reporting procedures, including the use of a new Monthly Contact Form, to routinize the monthly contacts made by each FPO with each grantee, and to standardize the collection of information from grantees.
- A new Onsite Monitoring Instrument (OMI) was developed to ensure greater consistency and accuracy in grantee reviews and to allow for much greater detail in the reporting of

review results while streamlining the questions asked and allowing for completing the tool online for the first time.

- The OMI serves as the basis for an enhanced Onsite Monitoring Report, with an increased focus on grantee strengths, including emerging and promising practices.
- For the 597 total RHY grants in FY 2016:
 - There were 149 grantees reviewed, and
 - Compliance issues were identified in less than 5 percent of those reviews.
- For the 595 total RHY grants in FY 2017:
 - There were 92 grantees reviewed, and
 - Compliance issues were identified in 4 percent of those reviewed.

Future Activity

- Per agency plans for continuous improvement:
 - Develop and provide ongoing trainings for FPOs and peer monitors (PMs) to assure consistent use of the OMI;
 - Develop PDF versions of the OMI for each program type (BCPs, TLPs/MGHs, and SOPs) for use when the grantee site does not have internet access;
 - Develop 360° feedback forms for all site review participants; and
 - Develop policy and procedure manuals, including monitoring standard operating procedures (MSOP) for FPOs and the peer monitor procedures (PMP) for PMs, to further assure consistency and fairness in the monitoring process.
- Pilot PDF versions of OMI and 360° feedback forms with a sample of federal project officers and utilize their feedback to strengthen instruments before implementation.
- Provide a review period for FYSB staff to utilize the MSOP and PMP and conduct subsequent review sessions, reviewing and revising both documents in accordance with user feedback.

Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability: Research and Program Improvement Investments

Summary

FYSB has invested in several research efforts and program improvement strategies to build the RHY knowledge base. These investments strive to secure timely and accurate data on important issues impacting the RHY field, and they also specify the unique needs of certain population groups. They are also implemented to obtain study findings that can be used to modify or adapt discretionary funding streams to be more responsive to RHY, as well as to foster increased grantee accountability to FYSB.

- FYSB was one of the partners in the Los Angeles Performance Partnership Pilot (P3) in Los Angeles, tackling fragmented services and the challenges presented by eligibility limits. Blending together federal funds that they already receive from participating agencies with new waivers, such as the waiver from FYSB expanding the eligibility age of homeless youth, P3 sites are lowering barriers to services.

- The SOP Data Collection Study, released in April of 2016, was the first of its kind, funded by FYSB and conducted by researchers at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The study focused on 873 youth, ages 14 to 21, in 11 cities nationwide, obtaining information on service utilization and needs from a subset of homeless street youth being served by a cohort of SOP grantees funded in FY 2010 (data collection occurred in 2013). The goal was to learn about the needs of street youth from their perspective and better understand which services they found helpful and to identify alternative services where needed.
- In 2016, FYSB provided \$5.26 million for a TLP Special Populations Demonstration Project focusing on LGBTQ youth between the ages of 16 and 21. The project identifies improvements in service delivery through nontraditional partnerships, innovations to reach disengaged youth, and how child welfare and Children’s Bureau resources could be accessed to support this population. Under the modified study design, data collection will start in September 2020, with a final report to be submitted in September 2021.
- Outcomes for eligible youth served by 13 TLP grantees and their partners in urban, suburban, and rural settings are being evaluated for the first time in a rigorous RCT. Given the limitation of an RCT, the pilot was only able to collect information on approximately 150 youth. FYSB will evaluate options for moving forward with the research, based on a draft from the study researchers.
- To improve services for domestic victims of human trafficking, FYSB awarded three cooperative agreements in 2014 to implement demonstration projects addressing human trafficking among RHY, with three additional demonstration projects awarded in 2015. The final evaluation report on the first cohort of projects was published in August 2017 and focused on processes of case management, partnership building, and community awareness.

Future Activity

- Identify 2019 TLP Demonstration Project results and share with grantees and the field through NCHYF, training provided by RHYTTAC, and TA provided by RHYTTAC and FYSB FPOs. Focus areas may include:
 - Effective partnership practices and models and engagement practices (shared with grantees through FYSB staff and RHYTTAC);
 - T&TA provided during onsite reviews that supported improvement in TLP projects; and
 - Successful leveraging of services for transition-age youth through the federal Children’s Bureau’s Chafee Foster Care Independence Program local child welfare agencies.
- Strengthen and expand the capacity of FYSB and its grantees to identify and support RHY who are victims of, or are at risk of, victimization by:
 - Disseminating information gathered in listening sessions on grantees’ training needs on human trafficking, the integration of survivors into youth programming, and promising practices on services for trafficked youth from underserved populations;
 - Developing online training and resources to enhance grantees’ capacity to identify and provide support services to RHY that may be victims of or at risk of human trafficking;

- Launching a series of online trainings through the NRS to address runaway prevention and discuss the intersection of runaway youth, youth homelessness, and human trafficking;
- Developing tools to measure the effectiveness and outcomes of the human trafficking resources developed under FYSB funds to ensure quality and positive outcomes;
- Ensuring that human trafficking workshops are included as part of the annual RHY National Training (designed and facilitated by RHYTTAC); and
- Hosting listening sessions and in-person discussions with grantees to understand human trafficking and its impact on their programs and communities.

Demonstrating Data-Driven and Outcome-Based Accountability: Service Provision Data for FYSB-Funded National Entities Supporting RHY Grantees and RHY

Summary

FYSB funds several national entities to support the work of the RHY program and RHY grantees (1) the RHYTTAC, which provides services to all grantees; and (2) the NCS, which provides services to youth in crisis and RHY and their families. Detailing their service provision activities highlights national efforts in youth support, knowledge transfer, and workforce development. Providing performance data for both affirms FYSB's attentiveness to, and utilization of, data for monitoring, program improvement, and decision-making purposes.

- RHYTTAC's primary purposes include:
 - Engaging systems and institutions to assist in the development of systemic improvements to RHY, including integration with CoC, and coordinated entry efforts;
 - Developing and contributing to the body of knowledge on RHY services, evidence-based practices, and strategies; and
 - Broadening public awareness of RHY through distribution of information and resources to grantees, service providers, and the public.
- In FY 2016 and FY 2017 (combined), RHYTTAC served 573 BCP grantees, 442 TLP grantees, and 189 SOP grantees, including:
 - Skills-based training for 693 participants;
 - Live webinars for 2,912 individuals;
 - On-demand training for 20,656 individuals; and
 - 561 web-based courses.
- In FY 2016 and FY 2017, RHYTTAC received and responded to 4,658 requests or questions from grantees and 694 additional requests for TA made by FYSB, and initiated 1,519 proactive TA information- and resource-sharing activities.
- The NCS is currently operated by the National Runaway Safeline. The mission of the NRS is to keep America's runaway, homeless, and at-risk youth safe and off the streets. As the federally funded national communication system for RHY, the NRS's primary purposes are:

- Answering hotline calls, texts, emails, and chat to connect young people with services;
 - Relaying messages between youth and their parents, families, or guardians when parties are not ready to communicate directly;
 - Facilitating and providing support for and during conference calls between youth and their parents, families, or guardians;
 - Maintaining, monitoring, and responding to an online forum with multiple topic threads;
 - Implementing the interactive *Let's Talk* curriculum and other educational materials to increase the visibility of 1-800-RUNAWAY and issues that RHY face every day; and
 - Leading and enhancing the National Runaway Prevention Month campaign on behalf of FYSB.
- In FY 2016 and 2017 combined, the NRS handled more than 63,000 crisis contacts and provided over 42,000 referrals. Of those contacts:
- 71 percent were in crisis and/or contemplating running away in FY 2016, rising to 78 percent in FY 2017;
 - 28 percent were living on the street in FY 2016, falling to 22 percent in FY 2017;
 - More than one-third identified family dynamics as a key issue; and
 - 85–90 percent (rising from FY 2016 to FY 2017) identified shelter as an immediate unmet need.

Future Activity

- Continued funding and data reporting requirements for RHYTTAC, the NRS, and the NCHYF will produce important service provision specifics and support FYSB's assessment of its investments in support of RHY.